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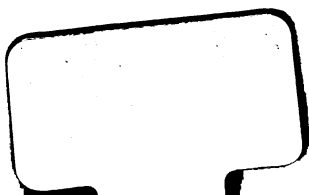
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From the author

THE
CREEDS OF INDIA:

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH.

A LECTURE DELIVERED TO THE
UDDINGSTON YOUNG MEN'S MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT
ASSOCIATION, OCTOBER 9TH, 1879.

BY

SIR EDWARD COLEBROOKE,

BART., M.P.

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I have endeavoured in this lecture to give a popular account of a series of changes amounting to revolutions of opinion, which India has passed through from the remotest time of which we have any record. The reception my address met with was very gratifying, and I was subsequently requested to deliver it again to another audience. This has encouraged me to hope that my sketch may interest a larger circle of readers, and I now send it forth in print. In preparing it for the Press I have expanded it very considerably, and after all it must be regarded as an outline of a very large subject.

I had thought of prefacing this paper with some suggestions to guide those who may desire to follow up the subject; but the materials are now very large, and scattered over such a variety of publications that it would be difficult to make a selection. There are very few systematic treatises on subjects connected with the Vedic literature suitable to the general reader. Some are referred to in these pages. Works on Buddhism are in greater demand, and those who desire further information will find the materials ready at hand. It is very satisfactory to find that popular information on all subjects connected with the antiquities of India are now sought for by a larger circle of readers than was the case sixty years since.

E. C.

THE CREEDS OF INDIA.

I.

THE VEDAS.

The subject which I have chosen for this lecture will appear to many of my hearers dry and, I fear, repelling. I propose to carry you through a history of some three thousand years, dealing with matters that cannot be presented in a light or attractive form, but have been laid open by the labour of scholars under circumstances of unusual difficulty. It is a history of religious opinion in a distant country and in remote ages, that presents none of those stirring incidents which excite the imagination, and to which the public usually turn when they open a chapter on the world's history. It is drawn from no historical records, for India has none, except what belongs to modern times. What we know directly of the political events which have influenced its destiny is chiefly derived from highly cultivated nations like the Greeks, who have come in contact with them in ancient times, or in more recent times from the Mahomedan conquerors of that country.

But India has a literature, and by its aid we learn something of the social life and religious opinions of its inhabitants at different epochs, some of them far removed from our time; and we know that they have undergone great changes, and that these changes have had great influence on hundreds of millions of neighbouring nations. I propose to present you with a short sketch of them. The results, I should add, have been worked out by the labour of successive scholars, some of them being men of eminent genius.

There are minds that feel a mysterious fascination in the remote history of their own and of other countries. The very obscurity which surrounds it constitutes the charm. Though there is an uncertainty with regard to some passages in this narrative, the main outline rests, in my opinion, on the soundest criticism.

As regards myself, I can only say, in justification of my having taken it up, that I have been, to some extent, familiar with Indian subjects from early days; that I was specially led to the study of the matter I have taken in hand about ten years since, when I undertook the biography of my father, a pioneer in the study of the literature of ancient India, and one of the greatest oriental scholars of his day; and I have since then followed with interest the progress of oriental research both at home and abroad.

If I were asked to state in a few words the popular view of India, as it prevailed some fifty years since, and which exists to a certain degree to the present day, I should say that it was a country a prey to the grossest superstitions, and whose people are divided into castes, that place an insuperable barrier between different classes, and form an obstacle to progress and improvement; and that the present condition of society has existed, with very little change, from the remotest ages.

The public have been led into this error regarding the past, and, to some extent, the present condition of this continent (for error it is), by the accounts which have come down to us from the Greeks more than 2000 years ago, and, partly, owing to the fact that the Hindus acknowledge the sanctity of certain ancient works called the *Vedas*, written in a language long obsolete, and that these works continue to be referred to as authorities in law and religion, and are employed for purposes of ritual at the present day. There is also a code of laws called the *Institutes of Menu*, written in the same dead language, the *Sanscrit*, and translated into English about eighty or ninety years since, which gives a picture of the social and religious life of that portion

of the people of India who recognize the authority of the *Vedas*, and the supremacy of the Brahmins, which resembles, in some of the leading particulars, their condition in the present day.

I may say, in passing, that while speaking of the people of India, you must dismiss from your minds any notion of India being occupied by one race professing one religion, or by two or three races of people. Putting aside the Mahomedans, who are estimated at forty-one millions, being one-sixth of the whole population, we have a variety of nations, differing as much as the nations of Europe. There are certain broad divisions, as the people of Hindustan, the Bengalees, the Marathas, the Punjabees, several distinct races in the south, besides various wild tribes in the hill country in Central India, and on the eastern frontier. To what extent the Indians are split up and divided may be inferred from the great variety of languages and dialects spoken throughout that great continent. My father, writing in 1801, estimated that there were fifty-seven or even eighty-four provinces, all with peculiar languages. But in speaking of India in the present day we embrace a larger circle, and, according to the estimate of Professor Monier Williams, there are, if we include the Tibetan dialects of the Himalayas, at least 100 languages and dialects; and Mr. Cust, who has lately written a work on the same subject, estimates that there are no less than 300 varieties of tongues. You may imagine from this how great must be the diversity of religious opinion; and that what we call the Hindu religion may really embrace a variety of faith and teaching.

But, to return from this digression, the accounts which have come down to us from the Greeks are very curious. After the invasion of the country by Alexander the Great, in the fourth century before Christ, Greek kingdoms were established throughout Asia, and one especially arose on the north-west of Affghanistan, and India became to some extent known to the Greeks through embassies and travellers; and much of the information they possessed is to be

found in known works, as that of the geographer Strabo and others. The Indians are described then, as now, divided into classes, *i.e.* castes, recognizing the authority of the Brahmins, who are described as a distinct tribe, inferior to the others in numbers, but superior in rank and estimation, and acting as the priests of the nation, and intrusted with the duty of offering sacrifices. Much also is said of the ascetics or devotees, who then, as now, led a wild life apart from human dwellings; but on this point the more ancient writers failed to discriminate between different classes of religious orders which must have existed in India at that period.* These and other particulars which have come down to us from those times were calculated to support the prevailing views as to the unchangeable character of Indian institutions, and to discourage the efforts of Christian missionaries to assail a religion and usages which claimed a prescription of several thousands of years.

On several questions touched upon in this address learned men have been divided, and I am far from maintaining that they are all free from doubt. It was at one time contended that Buddhism was the most ancient religion of India. This will not be maintained in the present day

* The fullest account of India as known to the Greeks is by a writer named Megasthenes, who visited the court of an Indian Prince reigning at Palibothra, identified with the modern Patna, in the fourth century before our era. Strabo, who derived much of his information from this work, which is lost, mentions an order of people opposed to the Brahmins, called Pramnæ, and characterizes them as contentious cavillers. These may have been Buddhists. More distinct evidence of the existence of Buddhism is to be found in another passage from the same work, where a distinction is drawn between the Brahmins and Germanes, an apparent corruption of Sramana, the term applied to Buddhist ascetics. They are described as living on alms, vowed to celibacy, and admitting orders of nuns under their rules—thereby pointing to the existence of the Buddhistic faith and practice. Later writers refer to Buddha and his religion even more distinctly. Thus a Greek writer of Alexandria, Porphyry, who lived in the third century of our era, points out that the Brahmins were of one race and descended from a common father. The Sramanæans, obviously the same as the Germanes of Strabo, are drawn from the Indians generally. Clemens Alexandrinus, who wrote about the same time, enters into similar details, and names Butta, that is Buddha, by name, who is said to be worshipped by some Indians as a god on account of his extreme venerableness.

in the face of modern discoveries; indeed the position which the rise of this faith occupies as intervening between the ancient religion of the Vedas and the modern religion of India may be regarded as fully established; and this is the key to the whole history that I have to lay before you. There are still many obscure points in the story, and year by year new light is thrown on the ancient literature bearing both on Brahminism and Buddhism. The summary that I have to lay before you of the history of these changes is, I believe, now generally accepted by oriental scholars.

I have said that the Vedas were written in an obscure dialect of a language which has ceased to be a spoken language for perhaps 2000 years. It has a close affinity with Greek and Latin, and is more remotely connected with the languages of modern Europe. An affinity of language implies a connection in blood, among the nations who spoke these allied tongues, and it may be assumed that there was a time when the ancestors of the nations of Europe and those of India, who speak a dialect of the Sanscrit, dwelt in Central Asia, and from thence migrated eastward and westward, and peopled the regions now occupied by Persians and Hindus in the east, and by nearly all the inhabitants of modern Europe in the west, including the different races of the British Isles. It will, I hope, add to the interest which belongs to this subject if we consider that we are tracing the religious history of our distant cousins.

Our present knowledge of the religion of ancient India dates from the publication of a learned essay on the Vedas, or sacred writings of the Hindus, by Mr. H. Colebrooke, upwards of seventy years ago. The task was attended with great difficulty, for the most important portion of these writings, *i.e.* the hymns, are written in an old dialect of the Sanscrit, imperfectly known to the most learned Brahmins of the day; they could at that time only be interpreted by means of commentators, who themselves lived in old times, and the most celebrated of whom flourished in the fourteenth cen-

tury of our era. This first review of the contents of a very large body of literature was, from its nature, general and incomplete, and no attempt was made in it to distinguish between the relative importance and antiquity of its different parts beyond pointing out that one of those collections of writings is not held in the same estimation as the rest, and bears evidence of being composed at a later period; and that some of the doctrinal treatises attached to the other collections are open to suspicion.

These collections are four in number, and each of them is composed of hymns and works on ritual and doctrine. The task of discriminating between them has been carried out by later scholars, pre-eminent among whom is Professor Max Müller, whose work on ancient Sanscrit literature, published about twenty years since, has never been superseded. I shall have occasion to draw on the vast storehouse of facts contained in it in some of the remarks I shall offer to you. To this information regarding the most ancient religion of India, has been added a vast amount of information regarding the rise of the religion of Buddha, which, commencing in the north of India about 500 or 600 years before the Christian era, has spread from thence over China, Japan, Siam, Burmah, the Eastern Archipelago, Ceylon, Tibet, and Tartary, and is supposed to number among its votaries more than a third of the human race.

The result of these discoveries has been to dispel the vague notions formerly prevalent as to the unchangeable character of Indian institutions, and to show that the religious system of that country has undergone revolutions of opinion as great as those of the Western world, and to enable us to trace, though obscurely, the different phases and forms of faith through which that country has passed.

In following out this subject we experience a difficulty at the outset. As India possesses no ancient historical records, so it has no system of chronology applicable to old times. In attempting to trace the history of religion in that country from its literary remains we depend mainly

on such internal evidence as the old writings themselves offer as to their relative antiquity, aided by the evidence of the language in which these works are written, and which has itself undergone a considerable change.

There is indeed an important landmark, which, if it can be determined with accuracy, will be of the greatest service. As the central figure in any review of these changes is the founder of Buddhism, the greatest pains have been given to determine this epoch. Various dates have been assigned by his disciples both in China and Ceylon, varying from the sixth to the tenth century before Christ. That which is now generally recognized by European scholars places the commencement of his career at the end of the seventh century B.C., and his death in the middle of the century following.* This is a point that I must ask you to keep well in mind, for on the assumption that the Vedic literature was antecedent to the rise of Buddhism, this last epoch becomes a point of departure from which we reckon backward to the first dawn of the religious history of that country.

There is another date on which Mr. Colebrooke relied in his essay on the Vedas as serving to determine the period of their composition, and, although it cannot be regarded as a landmark, it raises a strong presumption of very high antiquity. There is, in the calendars appended to these writings, a reference to the position which the sun occupied at the time of the equinox, and which agrees with the position which the sun held on the zodiac at that season fourteen

* The whole question is discussed with great learning by Professor Max Müller in his Sanscrit literature. It may be enough to say here that we derive the greatest help from the chronology of the Greeks. Sandracottus, a sovereign with whom the Greeks came into conflict after the death of Alexander, and with whom Seleucus, the Greek sovereign of Persia, formed a treaty, has been long identified with Chandragupta, a prince who figures in Indian annals, and whose grandson Asoka was a great patron of the Buddhists. The latter held a great council, which is noted in the religious annals of their faith, and was held, according to tradition, upwards of two hundred years after the death of the reformer. I should add that Max Müller assigns a more modern date than that which I have assumed in the text, and places his death in the year 477 B.C.

hundred years B.C. This is only to be regarded as a tradition, and there is no evidence that the Hindus were ever such accurate observers of the motions of the heavenly bodies as to render this available with any approach to accuracy within several centuries.

I must now begin my story by telling you what these ancient books consist of, and the evidence they afford as to the religious state of India in the old times. I shall then have to tell you something about Buddhism, now the principal religion of China, and many other countries in the far East, which took its rise in the north of India, and for a time almost superseded the ancient faith of the people; and, lastly, I must give an account of the present religious state of the country, in those points in which it differs from the old religion, or has been modified by the religion of Buddha.

The Vedas (a word meaning knowledge or science) consist of four collections, each of which is subdivided into several heads, consisting of a *sanhita* or collection of hymns, and of treatises on ritual, on theology, and sciences bearing on their study. Of these four collections, the fourth is regarded by the Hindus as of inferior authority, and does not command the same claim to antiquity as the others. The chief interest attaches to the first, the Rig-veda, the others being merely collections of certain of the hymns for special purposes.

Taking the three principal collections as a complete series, they may be separated into two classes of writings, each of which represents a distinct epoch or period during which a certain religious system prevailed.

First we have what is called the Mantra period, during which were composed the vast body of hymns forming the present collections.

Secondly, the Brahmana period, during which certain legendary and ritualistic treatises called Brahmanas were composed.

There is another series of works which have an important bearing on the religious history of ancient India; but I

cannot regard them as representing a distinct period, as they are occasionally found embodied in the Brahmanas, and are of a similar legendary character. These are the Upanishads or doctrinal treatises of a mystical nature, treating of the soul of man and its relation to God.*

Beginning with the hymns, they are very numerous, those of the Rig-veda being no less than 1017 in number; they are, as may be supposed, very varied in their character. Some are far-fetched and puerile, some are mystical and obscure. Others convey elevated ideas of the gods to whom they are addressed. But one will look in vain in them for those moral attributes of the Deity which we learn from the Hebrew Scriptures, still less those which are associated with Christian teaching. The gods of ancient India were tutelary deities, that protected their worshippers against temporal calamities, and against their enemies. They are exalted in some of these compositions to the position of creators and rulers of the whole earth, and, from occasional expressions, we may infer that, in the minds of some of the composers, the worship was that of one god, maker of heaven and earth. But there is nothing which would lead us to suppose that the gods to whom they were addressed loved

* These three divisions comprise the *Śruti* or revelation. To these again are appended certain treatises, which are included by Professor Max Müller in his work in the literature of the Vedic age. There are the *Vedāṅgas*, treatises composed for the purpose of aiding the student in his reading, and the priest in the exercise of the ceremonial. They treat severely on pronunciation, metre, grammar, explanation of words, astronomy, and ceremonial. These are not held in the same reverence, and form part of the *Smṛiti* or tradition. I have not thought it necessary to extend my short review beyond that portion which throws light on the history of the religion. Max Müller divides the literature of the Vedic age into four epochs. Reckoning backward from the *Sūtra* period, including the *Vedāṅgas* and other works not included in the revealed writings, we arrive successively at the Brahmanas and Mantras. Anterior to the latter he places a class of hymns of a more archaic character. There does not seem to be ground for this last distinction. Many of the hymns are of higher antiquity than the others, and the whole collection seems to have extended in duration over a very long period. According to another classification of Vedic literature it comprises two great divisions—practice and speculation—*Karma-kāṇḍa* and *Tnana-kāṇḍa*. The former include the hymns and rituals.

righteousness and hated iniquity, and required truth and purity in the inward heart, or that they promised a reign of justice on earth. There is no expression of hope on the part of the worshipper, as in the Psalms, that he would deliver the poor and needy, and preserve their souls from falsehood and wrong, and that dear should their blood be in his sight. No such high moral ideal of what was to be expected of those who should dwell in the tabernacle of God and rest on his holy hill; no such pleading for mercy as in the 51st Psalm.

Indeed the contrast between the religion of the Vedas and that of the Psalms is so marked that a whole lecture might be devoted to this subject only. For those who desire to pursue the subject, I would refer them to some excellent lectures to young men delivered by the present Dean of St. Paul's, in the great cathedral of London, published under the title of *The Sacred Poetry of Early Religions*.

To whom were these hymns addressed? The gods are various, but in power and attributes they are connected, and represent the powers of nature personified.

First we have *Agni* or fire (the *ignis* of the Latins). Like the ancient fire-worshippers of Persia, the Indians worshipped the pure element, maintaining a holy fire, over which their libations were cast, or to which offerings were made. *Surya*, the sun, is also reckoned among the gods of the Vedas, and it is probable that, in the most ancient times, his worship preceded that of the element itself, and came ultimately to be regarded as one of the manifestations of *Agni* or fire.

Next in importance is *Indra*, representing the heaven or firmament, like the Zeus or Jupiter of the Greeks or Romans.

Connected with these are *Ushas*, the dawn, regarded as the daughter of the sky, and the *Asvins*, twin deities ever young, travelling in a golden car and precursors of the dawn, sometimes represented as divine physicians and destroyers of disease; also the *Maruts* or winds.

Then we have *Varuna*, also representing the sky, like the Uranus (*Οὐρανός*) of the Greeks. *Mitra*, also representing the sun, and identified with the Mithra of the ancient Persians. *Rudra*, a powerful god supposed to be connected with Agni, fire; then we have the personification of the earth under the name of *Prithivi*, "the broad one," and hymns addressed to the clouds, to time, and to night.

Vishnu, a god of the later mythology, also appears in name; but he has more in common with the attributes of the other deities of the Pantheon than with his worship in later times. Without going through the list of minor deities I may add that *Yama*, god of the departed spirits, holds a very important place in the ancient mythology. Some of the hymns are in the form of dialogues, and the gods appear as speakers. Others are mythological, and deal with the mystery of creation. One very remarkable hymn is assumed by modern commentators to have been uttered by *Vach* or spirit, but this has been held to be doubtful. The personification of speech appears strange; but it follows not unnaturally from the sanctity that attached to these writings, and the importance that attached to their correct recitation. According to the orthodox view they were eternal and self-subsistent. It is not surprising that the very sounds in which they were uttered should excite reverence. It will be seen presently that in later times a mysterious efficacy was supposed to belong to the very letters and syllables.

It is impossible for me, in the limited time at my command, to do more than glance at the leading characteristics of these remarkable writings.

First. There is no mention of the triad of modern worship. Brahma does not appear as a deity. Vishnu is very different from the Vishnu of modern worship, and there is no allusion to his avatars or incarnations: no reference to Rama or Krishna, whose worship meets the eye everywhere in modern India. Siva is not named, nor is there any allusion to the impure emblem under which he is now

worshipped, and meets the eye in every village. Nor is there any reference to his consort Durga or Kali, and the blood-stained rites by which she is propitiated.

There is no reference to the system of castes; and the Brahmins occupy a very different position from that which they held in after-times. We do indeed read occasionally of Brahmins or Kshatriyas; but the former term is used in the sense of sage, poet, or officiating priest; the latter not necessarily a prince or warrior. The ruling race was all of one nation; but there were other races with whom the Aryans were at war, and out of whom grew, so it is inferred, the castes of later times.

What is perhaps of more importance in the history of religion, there is no mention of temples nor of images. The worship is chiefly domestic and patriarchal. There is no allusion to the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and very slight reference to a future state.

The customary offerings to the gods were ghee or clarified butter, poured on the fire, and the juice of a plant whose intoxicating powers were of the mildest kind. They were "the cups that cheer but not inebriate." The gods were not angry gods. They were mild beings that were invited to descend to the dwellings of the worshippers, and enjoy a cheerful feast. In this primitive epoch the offerings were not in expiation of sin, but for the nourishment of the gods. They were asked to aid the people against their enemies, to assist the harvest, and protect them against the storm, and the influences of evil spirits. There was no reference to those darker superstitions that gathered round the religion of India in later times. There is indeed in the later Vedic literature a reference to human sacrifices, and these may have always prevailed; but at the epoch to which I refer they were kept in the back-ground. Indeed the references to a future state are obscure and uncertain. The prayers are for temporal blessings, such as I have described.

Such was the religion of India in patriarchal times; and in speaking of India I must be understood as referring to

the northern provinces, which were occupied by the Aryan races who came from the north-west, and who appear, from geographical allusions in the ancient works, to have been mainly settled in the Punjab.

I must now present you with some examples of these ancient compositions. They are, I have said, very various, and they have been rendered in great variety into different European languages. A complete translation of the hymns of the Rig-veda in English was commenced by the late Professor H. H. Wilson, and is now being continued by Professor Cowell of Cambridge. The first specimen which I shall offer to you is a free metrical version of some hymns in honour of Parjanya, the rain god, by Dr. Muir. One of the verses was suggested as appropriate to the inclement season of 1872, and it is still more appropriate to the present year.

PARJANYA, THE RAIN GOD.

[As represented in the hymns of the Rig-veda, v. 83 and vii. 100, 101.]

I.

Parjanya laud with praises meet;
The fertilizing god extol
And bless, of living things the soul,
Whose advent men, exulting, greet.

II.

Like steeds a charioteer has spurred,
His watery scouts before him fly.
Far off, within the darkening sky,
The lion's thundering roar is heard.

III.

Fierce blow the blasts, the lightnings flash,
Men, cattle, flee in wild affright.
Avenging bolts the wicked smite;
The guiltless quake to hear the crash;

IV.

Malignant demons prostrate lie;
The forest's leafy monarchs tall
Convulsed, uprooted, earthward fall,
Whene'er Parjanya passes by.

B

v.

Urge on thy car, Parjanya, haste,
 And, as thou sweetest o'er the sky,
 Thine ample waterskins* untie
 To slake with showers the thirsty waste.

vi.

Now forth let swollen streamlets burst,
 And o'er the withered meadows flow:
 Let plants their quickening influence know,
 And pining cattle quench their thirst.

vii.

Thy wondrous might, O God, declare;
 With verdure bright the earth adorn,
 Clothe far and wide the fields with corn,
 And food for all the world prepare.

viii.

But O, we pray, Parjanya kind,
 Since now our harvest, drenched with showers,
 Aloud invokes the solar powers,
 Thy waterskins no more unbind.†

Edinburgh, 13th September, 1872.

J. MUIR.

The next which I shall present to you illustrates the simple familiar terms in which the gods were frequently addressed. It is the second hymn of the Rig-veda, and is quoted as a sample of the work by Professor Wilson in his lectures on the religion of the Hindus.

1. Approach, O Vayu (deity of the air); be visible: This Soma juice has been prepared for thee; approach, drink, hear our invocation.
2. Those who praise thee, Vayu, celebrate thee with sacred songs,

* This image is, of course, found in the original. It is well known that in Eastern countries skins are used for preserving wine and carrying water.—J. M.

† This verse, which has been mainly suggested by the disastrous rains of the present season, is justified by a brief reference in a verse of one of the hymns (v. 83, 10).—J. M.

provided with store of Soma juice, and knowing the season suitable for their oblations.

3. Vayu, thy assenting voice comes to the sacrificer, it comes to many through the offering of the libation.
4. Indra and Vayu, this juice has been prepared; come with benefits for us; verily the libation desires you.
5. Vayu and Indra, observe the libations; being present in the offerings, come quickly.
6. Vayu and Indra, mighty men, approach the priest of the sacrifice quickly on account of his prayers.
7. I invoke Mitra (the sun), the source of purity; I invoke Varuna, able to destroy; both cherishing earth with water.
8. Mitra and Varuna, be pleased with this propitiatory offering; for to you, assuredly, do sacrifices owe their success, as the waters do their abundance.
9. Mitra and Varuna, all-wise divinities, born for the benefit of multitudes, and multitudinously present, give efficacy to our acts.

I draw your special attention to the next specimen, which is one out of many hymns translated by Max Müller, and inserted in his work on Sanscrit literature; it is especially relied upon by him as showing the presence of moral truths in the nature-worship of the Aryans. You will judge how far the language of the hymn bears out this view. It will be observed that Varuna, to whom it is addressed, is propitiated by an offering of honey.

1. However we break thy laws from day to day, men as we are, O god Varuna,
2. Do not deliver us unto death, nor to the blow of the furious, nor to the anger of the spiteful!
3. To propitiate thee, O Varuna, we bind thy mind with songs, as the charioteer a weary steed.
4. Away from me they flee dispirited, intent only on gaining wealth; as birds to their nests.
5. When shall we bring hither the man who is victory to the warriors, when shall we bring Varuna, the wide-seeing, to be propitiated?

- (6. This they take in common with delight, Mitra and Varuna; they never fail the faithful giver.)
7. He who knows the place of the birds that fly through the sky, who, on the waters knows the ships,—
8. He the upholder of order, who knows the twelve months with the offspring of each, and knows the month* that is engendered afterwards,—
9. He who knows the track of the wind, of the wide, the bright, and mighty; and knows those who reside on high,—
10. He the upholder of order, Varuna sits down among his people; he, the wise, sits there to govern.
11. From thence perceiving all wondrous things, he sees what has been and what will be done.
12. May he, the wise son of time (âditya) make our paths straight all our days; may he prolong our lives!
13. Varuna, wearing golden mail, has put on his shining cloak; the spies† sat down around him.
14. The god, whom the scoffers do not provoke, nor the tormentors of men, nor the plotters of mischief,—
15. He who gives to men glory and not half glory, who gives it even to our own bodies,—
16. Yearning for him, the far-seeing, my thoughts move onwards, as kine move to their pastures.
17. Let us speak together again, because my honey has been brought: thou eatest what thou likest like a friend.
18. Now I saw the god who is to be seen by all, I saw the chariot above the earth: he must have accepted my prayers.
19. O hear this my calling, Varuna, be gracious now; longing for help, I have called upon thee.
20. Thou, O wise god, art lord of all, of heaven and earth: listen on thy way.
21. That I may live, take me from the upper rope, loose the middle, and remove the lowest!

I will give you another "free version" of one of the hymns

* The thirteenth or intercalary month.

† These spies or watchers are most likely the other Adityas, of whom it is said that "they see into what is evil and what is good, and that everything, even at the greatest distance, is near to them."

MAX MÜLLER.

by Professor Monier Williams. It is addressed to Indra, the god of the firmament. I may say here with reference to these representations of the power of the elements, that no one can appreciate the force of the allusions to the change of seasons who has not seen the remarkable transformation which the face of nature undergoes, in tropical countries, at the beginning of the rainy season. After a prolonged drought and intense heat, the change comes as if by magic. Almost in an instant the verdure bursts forth, and the air resounds with animal life, the humming of insects, and croaking of frogs.

Thou art our guardian, advocate, and friend;
 A brother, father, mother—all combined.
 Most fatherly of fathers, we are thine,
 And thou art ours. Oh! let thy pitying soul
 Turn to us in compassion when we praise thee,
 And slay us not for one sin or for many.
 Deliver us to-day, to-morrow, every day.
 Vainly the demon dares thy might; in vain
 Strives to deprive us of thy watery treasures;
 Earth quakes beneath the crashing of thy bolts.
 Pierced, scattered lies the foe—his cities crushed,
 His armies overthrown, his fortresses
 Shivered to fragments; then the pent-up waters,
 Released from long imprisonment, descend
 In torrents to the earth, and swollen rivers,
 Foaming and rolling to their ocean home,
 Proclaim the triumph of the Thunderer.

The two following hymns, with which I conclude my specimens of the religious worship of the ancient Indians, are of a more speculative character. They are both of great interest, and have been frequently translated. The first, which is taken from Professor Monier Williams' volume, follows the original very closely, with this exception, that the composer repeats his question, "Who is the god to whom we shall offer sacrifice?" at the end of each couplet. This detracts very much from the grandeur and force of this truly

elevated hymn, which Professor Williams justly claims as supporting the views of those who maintain that the original faith of the Hindus was monotheistic.

What god shall we adore with sacrifice?
 Him let us praise, the golden child that rose
 In the beginning, who was born the lord—
 The one sole lord of all that is; who made
 The earth and formed the sky; who giveth life,
 Who giveth strength; whose bidding gods revere,
 Whose hiding-place is immortality;
 Whose shadow, death; who by his might is king
 Of all the breathing, sleeping, waking world.
 Where'er let loose in space, the mighty waters
 Have gone depositing a fruitful seed
 And generating fire, there *he* arose
 Who is the breath and life of all the gods;
 Whose mighty glance looks round the vast expanse
 Of watery vapour—source of energy,
 Cause of the sacrifice—the only god
 Above the gods.

The spirit of the last, which I now insert, can only be rendered by a prose translation. Many elegant versions of this strange hymn have been given in the two works from which I have chiefly drawn, but the version of Dr. Muir, which I subjoin, seems to me to represent more clearly the state of half belief and half doubt in which the composer viewed the mystery of creation. The word “desire,” which is here represented as the first cause, is rendered in Max Müller’s version by “Love.” The following is the passage in his work:—

“The germ that still lay covered in the husk
 Burst forth, one nature from the fervent heat;
 Then first came *love* upon it.”

Professor H. H. Wilson, in his review of Max Müller’s work, denies that the word *kama*, here rendered “love,” can be employed in the transcendental sense here assigned to it;

but it rather implies desire or will on the part of the sole existing being to create: a language that is consistent with other passages in the Vedas. This shows with what care and caution we should interpret these primeval speculations.

So also the word *tapas*, here rendered "fervent heat," is one that appears again and again in the later Vedic writings, and a mysterious efficacy is attached to it. It is commonly translated "austerity."

1. There was then neither nonentity nor entity; there was no atmosphere nor sky beyond it. What covered (all)? Where was the receptacle of each thing? Was it water, the deep abyss?

2. Death was not then, nor immortality; there was no distinction of day or night. That one breathed calmly, with *svaddha* (nature); there was nothing different from It (that One) or beyond It.

3. Darkness* there was; originally enveloped in darkness, this universe was undistinguishable water; the empty (mass), which was concealed by a husk (or by nothingness), was produced singly by the power of austerity (or heat).

4. Desire* first arose in It, which was the first germ of mind. This the wise, seeking in their heart, have discovered by the intellect to be the bond between nonentity and entity.

5. The ray which shot across these things,—was it from above, or was it below? There were productive energies and mighty powers; Nature (*svaddha*) beneath, and Energy (*prayati*) above.

6. Who knows, who here can declare whence has sprung, whence this creation? The gods are subsequent to its formation; who then knows from what it arose?

7. From what source this creation arose, and whether (any one) created it or not. He who in the highest heaven is its ruler, He knows, or he does not know.

Such was the religion of India in the old time. In the lapse of ages this primitive worship became corrupted, and from the same body of literature we can trace the change it underwent.

The Bramanas constitute a body of ritualistic precept

* Mr. Colebrooke, in a note to his translation of this hymn, points out that darkness and desire (in the original *Tamas* and *Kama*) bear a distant resemblance to the Chaos and Eros of Hesiod. Theog. V. v. 116.

and illustration, full of legendary lore. They were originally intended as directories for the use of priests, and presenting rules for the employment of the hymns, interspersed with legends and controversial remarks. The age was one of ritualism and of priestly ascendancy.

Ascetic practices and religious sacrifices had now acquired an importance which rendered those who employed them superior to the gods to whom they were originally offered, and by which they were propitiated. These ideas pervade these works, and also the Indian epics and their mythology.

The composers of these works seem to have taken a special pleasure in solving all the mysteries of creation by means of sacrificial acts. Among some illustrations of this part of the ancient mythology in Muir's Sanscrit texts I find the following:—Brahma is described as creating the universe, commencing with the different castes, by means of the Vedas. "He lauded with one, living beings were formed. Prajapati was the ruler. He lauded with three, the Brahman was created. Brahmanaspati was the ruler. He lauded with five, existing beings were created. Dhatri was the ruler."* Then follow the seven rishis or sages, the seasons, animals, &c. In another passage Prajapati† (the lord of creatures) begins by practising austerity, represented by a word (*tapas*), which plays a great part in these legends, and is variously rendered in translations by heat, fervour, meditation, abstraction, or austerity. Accordingly, in one of these Bramanas, *tapas* works without any first cause except the universe itself. "At first this (universe) was not anything. There was neither sky, nor earth, nor air. Being non-existent, it resolved 'let me be.' It became *fervent*. From that fervour smoke was produced," then fire, light, the world, living beings, &c.‡ On another occasion Prajapati is de-

* Muir's Sanscrit Texts, i. 28.

† This epithet was originally applied to Savitri, the sun, and to Soma, and afterwards came to denote a separate deity. Muir's Sanscrit Texts, v. 390.

‡ Muir, v. 301.

scribed as having formed thirty-three worlds out of the oblation of boiled rice.

In the Aitareya Brahmana, which is one of the most important of these treatises, the very instruments employed in the sacrificial acts had a potent influence. The second book of this work treats of the animal sacrifice, and begins thus:—

“The gods went up to the celestial world by means of this sacrifice. They were afraid that men and Rishis, having seen their sacrifice, (by means of which they ascended into heaven), might come after and inquire (whether they could not obtain some sacrificial knowledge). They debarred them by means of the *Yūpa*, *i.e.* the sacrificial post. The *yūpa* is so called (from *yoyupayan*, they debarred).”

The narrative proceeds to tell how the post was stuck in the ground with its point downwards, but men and Rishis, having discovered it, turned its point upward, by which means they obtained a knowledge of the sacrifice, and beheld the celestial world.

Then follow minute directions about the mode of constructing the post; and he who desires heaven is instructed to make it of a particular wood.

In another part of the same work the gods are described as having conquered the heavenly world by means of austerities, penances, and sacrifices. After the *Vāpa*, a portion of the body of the animal, had been offered to them, the heavenly world became apparent.

In another passage mysterious efficacy attaches to the recitation of certain texts. He who wishes for a long life should repeat 100 verses; for the (full) life of a man is 100 years. He who wishes for heaven should repeat 1000 verses; for the heavenly world is the distance of about 1000 days' travelling on horseback.

In another passage beauty and wisdom is the reward of any one who uses the two Gayatri verses of the Svishtakrit; for the Gayatri is beauty, full of wisdom. Other verses are recommended to those who desire long life, while one who

desires heaven must use two Anushtubhs,* because—I hesitate to give the reason—

“There are 64 syllables in the two anushtubhs, and these are three worlds (earth, sky, and heaven), each of 21 parts. With each 21 syllables he ascends to these worlds, and with the sixty-fourth he stands firm in heaven.”

It is difficult to draw comparisons between degrees of extravagance. Perhaps the climax is reached in an account of creation in the Sataputha Brahmana, where Menu the primeval being is described as going along meditating a hymn. “Making clarified butter, coagulated milk, whey, and curds, he made an offering to the waters. In a year a woman was brought forth from it,” and a great deal more of the same puerile character.

These examples will serve to illustrate the views of the times as to the power of sacrificial and other rites, and the efficacy of the work done, (the *opus operatum* of the middle ages of Europe). Sacrifice became a sort of magic; it constituted a power superior to the gods.

Then again the sacrifice of animals, which had been originally very sparing, increased in number and frequency, and we read of sacrificial acts carried on through many days, and requiring a great array of priests. The most potent of all appears to have been the hundred-horse sacrifice. Professor Monier Williams says that this sacrifice, conducted according to the prescribed rites, exalted the sacrificer to the rank of a powerful deity, and even entitled him to displace Indra himself from the dominion of heaven. Hence the gods themselves became jealous of the new powers exercised by mankind.

Lest you should suppose that I have in the preceding extracts given an exaggerated view of the depth of frivolity and superstition at which the Hindu mind had arrived during this epoch, I will quote some lines from one of the most

* The Gayatri and Anushtubh are metres consecrated by their use in the Vedic hymns.

eminent oriental scholars of the day, where he deals with this branch of Indian literature. Max Müller observes:—

“The Brahmanas represent no doubt a most interesting phase in the history of the Indian mind; but judged by themselves as literary productions, they are most disappointing. No one would have supposed that at so early a period, and in so primitive a state of society, there could have risen up a literature which for pedantry and downright absurdity can hardly be matched anywhere. There is no lack of striking thoughts, of bold expressions, of sound reasoning, and curious traditions in these collections; but these are only like the fragments of a torso, like precious gems set in brass and lead. The general character of these works is marked by shallow and insipid grandiloquence, by priestly conceit and antiquarian pedantry.”*

The picture which I have endeavoured to present to you of the religious condition of India, during the period of Brahminical ascendancy, would be incomplete without a short reference to another portion of the old Vedic literature. The fourth of these collections, the *Atharva-veda*, occupies an anomalous position, as it is included in the ancient literature, but it has not been held in the same repute, even among the Hindus, as the other three Vedas; and the language in which it is composed is of a more modern character. For these reasons it has not excited the same interest among scholars. At the same time it demands a place here, as it represents the religion in its decline.

When sacrifice and ceremonial was reduced to a sort of magic, and superseded the simple reliance of the Aryan race on the protection of their gods, prayers were employed like incantations, without reference, not merely to the spirit of the old worship, but the very words of the prayers themselves. New forms were introduced to meet the demand for superhuman influence on the events of life. The hymns of the *Atharva-veda* are a mixed collection, some of which are to be found in the more ancient collections; others were, according to the view of Max Müller, intended as

*Ancient Sanscrit Literature, p. 389.

supplements to the sacrificial system, with a view to counteract the influence of any untoward event that might happen during the sacrifice. But that which gives a character to the collection is the number of imprecations and incantations with which it abounds. A Sanscrit writer, quoted by Professor Max Müller, describes it as follows:—

“The Veda is divided into Rich, Yajush, and Saman, for the purpose of carrying out the sacrifice under its three different forms. The duties of the Hotri priests are performed with the Rig-veda, those of the Adhvaryu priests with the Yajur-veda, those of the Udgatri priests with the Sáma-veda. The duties of the Brahman and the sacrificer are contained in all three. The Atharva-veda, on the contrary, is totally different. It is not used for the sacrifice, but only teaches how to appease, to bless, to curse,” &c.*

This branch of the Vedas thus became a manual for sorcerers, a trade that always abounded in ancient times. But at this period the religion became a sort of sorcery, and the Brahman the chief wizard of the country. In the imprecations conveyed there is said to be much sameness. A single verse, which is quoted by Mr. Colebrooke in his essay on the Vedas, shows that the charms employed resemble some that classic students are familiar with in the writings of Virgil. A power is conveyed to a grass, which, by means of the formula, becomes a fetich:—

“Destroy, O sacred grub, my foes! exterminate my enemies; annihilate all those who hate me, O precious gem!”

The general character of these incantations will be sufficiently illustrated in the following passage from an essay by Professor Whitney in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*:—

“The most prominent characteristic feature of the Atharvana is the multitude of incantations which it contains; these are pronounced either by the person who is himself to be benefited, or, more often, by the sorcerer for him, and are directed to the pro-

* Ancient Sanscrit Literature, p. 445.

curing of the greatest variety of desirable ends; most frequently, perhaps long life, or recovery from grievous sickness is the object sought. Then a talisman, such as a necklace, is sometimes given, or in very numerous cases some plant endowed with marvellous virtues is to be the immediate external means of the cure; further, the attainment of wealth or power is aimed at, the downfall of enemies, success in love or in play, the removal of petty pests, and so on, even down to the growth of hair on a bald pate."

Before leaving this part of my subject, I should add that we are not dependent on the treatises called *Brahmanas* for illustration of the picture of the religious and social condition of India during the epoch of Brahminical ascendancy. There is the code of laws which I have before referred to, called the *Institutes of Menu*, and the epic and other poems. The former is not merely a code of civil and criminal law, but a body of precepts for the direction of the life of a Brahmin through its several stages, of student, householder, anchorite, and religious devotee; it also contains rules for conducting sacrifices and worship, and for penances, and a variety of precepts regarding government, also treating of domestic life and private morals. In it the Brahmin is raised to a superhuman elevation:—

"A Brahmin whether learned or unlearned is a mighty divinity, just as fire is a mighty divinity. . . . From his high birth alone a Brahmin is regarded as a divinity by the gods."

In other passages he is declared to possess tremendous powers. It is asked,

"Who, without bringing destruction on himself, can provoke those men by whose imprecation all-devouring fire was created, and by whom the undrinkable ocean was swallowed, and the wasted moon restored to its full size?"

Everything regarding the Brahmin runs in this strain. Any injury done to the saintly race is visited with the severest penalties. His own offences are treated with the greatest leniency. The work also contains a multitude of

minute precepts regarding observances, rituals, penances, and the importance attached to the recitation of the Vedas, all tending to show that the age was one of frivolous ceremonial.

Before I close my sketch of the religion of India during the Vedic period, I must ask your attention to a very interesting body of writings, which are included by Max Müller, whose arrangement I have followed, in the Brahmana literature, and have much in common with those treatises, but they are sufficiently distinct in their aim to be treated separately. These are the Upanishads, a series of mystical treatises that are appended to each Veda, and set forth an inner doctrine. Like the Brahmanas they are legendary and ritualistic, and run into similar extravagancies. But their object is to teach an inner and higher doctrine. Man is regarded as part of the universal soul of the world, a reunion with which should be the great object of our life.

It has been concluded from the general tenor of these writings that the ancient creed of India was monotheistic, and Rammohun Roy, a celebrated Brahmin, who died about fifty years since, grounded upon them an attempt to reform the religion of his countrymen, to put down idolatry, and institute the worship of one God by prayer and thanksgiving. It is now generally admitted that the doctrine in these compositions is pantheistic, to use a word representing views that have prevailed at all times, that the universe is pervaded by one soul, of which our own are a part, and in which we live and move, and have our being. But the Pantheism of the Upanishads varies from the most refined and spiritual views down to something that cannot be distinguished from materialism.

I have pointed out to you that, even in the early hymns, there is something of mystical speculation into the origin of things and the creation of the world; but they generally represent man as belonging to an inferior order of beings, and addressing the gods as beings possessed of superhuman

power, and controlling the order of nature. The Upanishads may be regarded as an attempt to bring man nearer to God, and indeed render him one with the universal soul. It is a doctrine full of comfort to those who regard God as a spirit, to be worshipped in spirit and truth, and in whom we may not merely have our being, but in union with whom we may have our end. But it has its dark side; it is the parent of doubt, verging to materialism and atheism. Of this the literature of India affords full proof.

These speculations or beliefs, if they can be so regarded, represent the awakening of the Indian mind, and its reaction against the degrading superstitions under which it was buried. More has been claimed for them. They have been regarded by some as containing the germ of the philosophical systems which afterwards prevailed, and indeed prevail to the present day. It has further been contended that from one of the most important of their philosophies, the Sankhya, was deduced the mysterious doctrine regarding the soul of man, which found its exponent in Buddhism. In these views I cannot altogether concur. That which regards the rise of the philosophical systems may be true to a certain extent, and yet even a cursory examination of the Upanishads must satisfy a student that the age in which the more ancient were composed was not one of vigorous thought, and that these speculations did not tend in that direction. They give the opinions then current on the origin of creation, and the relation of man to the world, mixed up with a mass of legendary and fabulous matter, which shows that we are in the infancy of inquiry. They have their proper place as part of the Brahmana literature; indeed, some of these treatises are incorporated with those treatises. They must share the reproach which belongs to them, redeemed only by the consideration that they represent an age of transition and the yearning of the mind for something higher and better.

As little am I inclined to accept the view that Buddhism was an offset from a system of philosophy such as this. So

far back as the year 1828, the German writer Ritter threw out for consideration whether Buddhism did not in fact give the first impulse to vigorous thought in India, and marked the epoch which divided the ancient religious literature from the modern scholastic philosophy. He contended, with much force, that the rise of a religion such as that of Buddha, which denied the authority of the Vedas, must have compelled the votaries of the old faith to appeal to reason, and support their doctrines by philosophical views such as we find compounded in such strange mixture in the philosophical systems. Much that appears odd in this mixture of religion and philosophy becomes intelligible if we accept this theory; but the grounds on which these opinions were founded were at that time more or less conjectural, though supported by great learning, derived entirely from Brahminical literature. They seem to me confirmed by what we now know of the life of Buddha and the rise of his religion. I am, however, here anticipating some matters to which I shall have to draw your attention further on. I only wish you now to bear in mind that we have arrived at a period of transition, when new ideas were penetrating society, leading ultimately to a great revolution.

Before quitting the subject of the Upanishads I must present you one or two of the most favourable specimens of these writings. They represent the best side of their mode of teaching.

The first is a portion of the Isa Upanishad, a metrical version by Professor M. Williams.

Whate'er exists within this universe
Is all to be regarded as enveloped
By the great Lord, as if wrapped with a vesture.
There is one only Being who exists
Unmoved, yet moving swifter than the wind;
Who far outstrips the senses, though as gods
They strive to reach him; who himself at rest
Transcends the fleetest flight of other beings;
Who, like the air, supports all vital action.

He moves, yet moves not; He is far, yet near;
 He is within the universe. Whoe'er beholds
 All living creatures as in him and him—
 The universal Spirit—as in all,
 Henceforth regards no creature with contempt.

My concluding extracts will be from one of the best known and most favourable specimens of these speculative treatises, and is more coherent than some of them.

The Katha Upanishad was one of those selected by Rammohun Roy to support his view as to the monotheism of ancient India. It has been more recently translated by Dr. Roer, and published in the Bibliotheca Indica. A metrical version with the prose subjoined will be found in Dr. Muir's lately published volume of metrical translations.

A pious Brahmin youth, who questions the efficacy of a sacrifice which his father is about to offer, desires to be offered in its place. The father, being repeatedly pressed by his son, accepts the offer hastily and with anger. Nacheketas, the son, proceeds to the home of Yama, the god of the dead, to receive his doom. He obtains an influence over the god by his answers to certain questions, and is offered three boons. To appease his father's anger is his first thought. To obtain a knowledge of fire, by which heaven is obtained, "where there is no fear, and where even Yama cannot always exercise dominion," is his next demand. The last is to be instructed in the nature of the soul, and the lot of man after death. The great question of "to be or not to be," is declared by Yama to be attended with such difficulty that the gods themselves desire to penetrate the mystery. He desires to be released from his promise, and offers in succession wealth, sensual enjoyments, even the wide expanded earth, which are all rejected by the young votary, who replies—

"All these things, O death, are ephemeral; an entire life is but short. Thine be the cars and the dancing and singing. A man cannot be satisfied with wealth. Shall we obtain wealth if we

have seen thee? . . . The boon I choose is the one I have said . . . Nacheketas asks for no other boon than this, of which the knowledge is hidden."

Yama, thus adjured, begins his discourse by informing his pupil that what is good is different from what is pleasant. The wise man chooses the good; the ignorant, wise in their own conceit, regarding themselves as instructed, go wandering about like blind led by the blind. This is the key to the style of teaching in this and other treatises. Knowledge of the nature of the soul renders men superior even to death. Yama accordingly proceeds:—

"Fancying that this world and no other exists, the unthinking man, again and again, becomes subject to my sway. . . . The soul is more minute than an atom, and transcends reasoning. When it is declared by one who beholds no duality, there is no doubt as to it. . . . The wise man, recognizing by spiritual contemplation the primeval divine soul, invisible and enveloped in mystery, seated in the heart, abandons joy and grief. . . . The omniscient soul is not born, and does not die."

After setting forth the doctrine of immortality, Yama treats of the two souls and the relation of man to the universal soul:—

"The indestructible Brahma is the place where all fear disappears. . . . Know the soul as the rider, the body as the car; know intellect as the charioteer, and mind again as the reins. They say the senses are the horses, and their object the roads. The enjoyer or the rider is the soul endowed with body, senses, and mind. Whoever is unwise, with reins never applied, has the senses unsubdued, like the vicious horses of the charioteer. . . . But whoever is wise, mindful, always pure, gains the goal, from whence he is not born again. . . .

"Higher than the senses are their objects, higher than their objects is the mind; higher than the mind is intellect; higher than intellect is the great soul. . . . Whoever has understood (the nature of Brahma), which is without sound, without touch, without form, which does not waste, which is eternal, without smell, without be-

ginning and without end, higher than his great one (intellect), which is firmly based, escapes from the mouth of death."

The discourse is carried much further, but these extracts will probably satisfy you as to the character of the teaching, and the goal at which the pupil was to arrive. The preceding simile has attracted attention from its resemblance to a celebrated passage in Plato's *Phædrus*. It may bear a practical interpretation applicable to daily life. This, however, was not the tendency of these speculations, nor was it the *goal* at which they arrived.

With this example of the teaching of the later Vedic period I must conclude this chapter of my narrative, and you may be relieved by knowing that I am closing the history of a thousand years. We have now to enter upon a new epoch.*

* The grounds on which it has been concluded that the Vedic writings are of high antiquity are necessarily conjectural. It will readily be understood that they must have extended over a long period, probably many centuries, when it is considered that the changes they denote are from a worship of a simple character to one in the highest degree ceremonial and superstitious, and from this again to one that was mystical and speculative; also that they mark great social changes, the establishment of the spiritual authority of the Brahmins, and the rise of the distinction of castes. Indeed, the growth of this latter system, as it was established at the time of the composition of the *Institutes of Menu*, a work that we have strong reasons to suppose was prebuddhistic, must have been the work of ages.

Max Müller, in his *Ancient Sanscrit Literature*, considers it impossible to bring the Brahmana literature within a shorter period than 200 years. H. H. Wilson, in his review of this work, considers that this is far too short, and that 500 years would not be too protracted for such a complete remodelling of the primitive system. The latter writer carries the commencement of the Brahmana period to the tenth or eleventh century B.C.

The growth of the vast collection of hymns, varying from formulæ of a simple character to what may be called philosophic views, also represents the working of the religious feelings of the nation during a considerable number of years, perhaps centuries. These, too, must have been well established in sanctity before they were collected and arranged in their present form. Max Müller assigns about 400 years for this early epoch. Some writers have assumed that they date back to far more remote times. These estimates as to the high antiquity of these writings are supported by the lists of traditional teachers, some of which extend to more than fifty names, and by the change in the

II.

B U D D H A.

The character of the religion of India at this latter period has, I hope, been made sufficiently clear in my preceding remarks. It was one of rites and ceremonies, and of priestly ascendancy. It did not profess to reach the millions. The rules and duties were for the higher castes; and the lower classes, who, we may suppose, represented the major portion of the people, were left almost out of account. The excess of superstition had nurtured a spirit of scepticism, of which the *Upanishads* afford evidence. There was an inner doctrine, in some cases refined and mystical, but still more frequently material and gross, which was held to be consistent with the national religion, and therefore excited very little alarm, as indeed appears from these treatises being appended to the Vedic writings and forming a part of them.

Against this a reaction arose, which turned the whole current of the Indian mind in a new direction, and had its influence on neighbouring nations. The history of the life of Buddha is that of a young prince of a gentle contemplative nature, surrounded by everything which could conduce to earthly enjoyment; but, oppressed by a horror of the miseries of man's destiny, he broke every chain that united him to the world, and became an ascetic after the manner of the times, living in the woods, performing the usual austerities of the age, and followed by admiring dis-

structure of the language. With regard to the latter point, Sir William Jones was of opinion that the Sanscrit of the three Vedas, that of the Institutes of Menu, and that of the Puranas, differed in pretty exact proportion to the Latin of Numa, of whose laws entire sentences are preserved, that of Appian, in the fragments of the Twelve Tables, and that of Cicero or Lucretius; and he concludes that these changes in the Sanscrit language covered some 600 years. Such are the data, necessarily vague, on which we have to form our estimates.

ciples, and dependent upon alms for his subsistence. There he unfolded a doctrine, which was, to a certain degree, based on some of the speculative views then current; but it took a new departure, and, at the time, must have been regarded as revolutionary.

His name, and the scenes of his wanderings, and the incidents of his life are all recorded in the scripture of his followers. He was a Kshatriya, *i.e.* of the military caste, a prince, and son of a king named Suddhodana, who reigned in Oude. His own name was Siddharta, his tribal name Sakya. The title of Buddha (the enlightened) was not assumed by him, but conferred by his followers, in after-times. He pretended to no more than that knowledge which was open to all by abstract meditation and self-control; but this knowledge laid open the most momentous truths. According to his teaching, the destiny of man on earth was one of misery; the great aim of man was to escape from it. No promise of rewards in a future state would soothe a mind oppressed by this dreadful thought of the wretchedness of man's lot; for, according to the doctrine of transmigration, the soul returned again and again to this miserable existence. The soul of man was eternal, and so also was the world, and all creation was bound together by a chain which connected the remotest past with the present. As, in the life around us, every effect is traceable to a cause, this law ran its course through eternity. The consequence of a man's acts followed him, not merely in this life, but through all time. Any happiness he now enjoyed might be the result of his own acts in a remote existence. The evil that he did might be visited on himself through all futurity. The redeeming feature of the doctrine prescribed by him was a high standard of morality and a belief in the power of good. His teaching teemed with benevolence, love to man and to all creation.

Everything connected with the life and teaching of a man, whose influence on the religious history of the world has been so great, is full of interest. The leading incidents of

his life, though surrounded by legends of the wildest character, illustrate the nature of his teaching and the feelings with which he was regarded by his disciples, and the struggle that his mind passed through in working out his great idea. In the *Lalita vistara*, a legendary narrative that forms the basis of the various lives of Buddha, and is translated by M. Foucaux, gods and demons are described as taking a part in the great drama. It opens with a scene in the heaven of *Touchita*,* where the Buddha is enjoying the homage of the gods, the guardians of the world. He quits this abode of bliss, and commences his mission by preaching to the gods themselves; and it is then that he makes the announcement that, touched with compassion for mankind, he will in ten years be born of a woman. The sons of the gods descend to the country of *Jambu*, and in the form of Brahmins study the *Vedas* and *Brahmanas* to ascertain the times and circumstances of his appearance, and the country and family where he will appear. After a long discussion a member of the tribe of *Sakya* is alone thought worthy of the honour. The birth is miraculous, and is followed by prodigies; all the statues of the gods rise and salute the young infant when he is first presented at their temple, and the history of his youth runs in the same vein. All the incidents of this narrative are not of this puerile character; some are, indeed, poetic, and point to a great moral conquest. He is visited by an Indian *Simeon*. The narrative is long. I will give you an abridged version, following nearly the letter of the story.

In those days, upon the slope of the Himalaya, king of mountains, there dwelt a rishi named *Asita* (black), possessed of the five classes of transcendental knowledge. Having observed many unusual apparitions at the time of *Bodhisitwa's* birth, the sons of the gods moving to and fro through the heavens, chanting the song of Buddha, and waving their garments, he resolved to examine the cause of

* "The place of happiness."

these wonders, and was enabled by his spiritual vision to detect, in the city of Kapila Vastu, the child shining with the light that comes from pure actions, and adored by all the worlds. He announced to his pupil Naradatta that the great diamond had appeared, but he was left in doubt whether the rule of the new-born infant would be that of a great conqueror, or that of a perfect Buddha, teaching what had never before been revealed. Accordingly the rishi and his disciple performed a miraculous journey, and appeared at the gate of the king's palace and demanded admission. The king treated him with the highest respect, and demanded the cause of the visit. The rishi answered, "O king, unto you a child is born; I have travelled here to see him." Being admitted to the chamber where the child was sleeping, he observed that he bore on his body all the marks that belong to greatness, and surpassed those of Brahma and the guardians of the world. He took the child in his arms, remained pensive, and reflected on the double destiny open to him, and then burst into tears. The king, alarmed, demanded whether any evil destiny awaited the infant. The rishi replied, "O king, I weep not for the child, but for myself. I am old and stricken in years. This child will be a perfect Buddha. For the salvation and for the happiness of gods and of the world, he will teach the law of virtue. Those who follow it will be delivered from the consequences of birth. He will deliver the old, the sick, the dying, the afflicted, the sorrowing. With the rain of the pure law will he calm those who are devoured by the flame of passion. He will conduct to Nirvana those who are enveloped in the darkness of the bad paths. He will deliver those who are bound in the meshes of natural corruption. He will confer the eye of wisdom on those whose sight is darkened by the thick darkness of ignorance. As, O king, the flower of the Udumvara appears only rarely, so, after thousands of kalpas, Buddhas appear from time to time in the world. Hundreds of thousands of millions of beings will be conducted by him to 'the other shore' and to immortality, and I shall not see

this pearl of Buddhas, and I shall not share in the deliverance. That, O great king, is why I weep."

The circumstances attending his "great renunciation," as it is called, are what his followers love to dwell upon, and are variously told. On driving out from the city one day he met an old man in the last stage of decrepitude and bent nearly double. "What is this, coachman?" said the young prince. "Sir," answered the driver, "this is old age; his senses are dulled, his strength is gone; he is contemned by his neighbours; unable to help himself, he has been abandoned in this forest like a bundle of wood." "Is this a peculiarity of his family?" demanded the prince, "or is it a law of the world?" The charioteer replies that such is the destiny of man; in every being youth is conquered by age. "Then is youth feeble and ignorant," said the young man; "proud of his youth he sees not old age. If this body is the future abode of old age, what have I to do with pleasure and joy? Turn round the chariot and carry me back to the palace."

On successive occasions the prince, while driving out, meets with a man in the last stage of emaciation and wasted with fever, and afterwards encounters a corpse. Dialogues ensue between the prince and the driver of his chariot, leading to similar reflections on the vanity of the world, and its pleasures and vain delights, and to the same conclusion. The chariot is turned back and he returns to the palace. Lastly he meets a Brahmachari (or Brahmin student), with his begging bowl. The prince notices his calmness and dignity of manner, and that he carries the mendicant's bowl with modesty and without spiritual pride. On being informed by his driver of the nature of his occupation, "and I covet such a life myself," he said. "The spiritual life has ever been esteemed by the wise. It shall be my support hereafter, the fruit of life, joy, and immortality."

According to some versions these appearances were visions sent by a spirit to lead him to the right path. In the Lalita vistara, the king, his father, was troubled by a

dream warning him of his son's future career. The youth was accordingly surrounded by every luxury which could attach him to the world, and it was on his way to some palace of delight, built for the purpose of counteracting his destiny, that he met the visions that determined his future lot.

He was in his twenty-ninth year when this crisis in his fate arrived—a crisis which had, no doubt, been determined long before in the mind of one who was formed by nature for an ascetic life. On returning from the last vision, he received tidings of the birth of his son. He had been married for some years, and the event was not expected. He said, "This is a new and strong tie I shall have to break," and he returned home thoughtful and sad. It seemed to have impelled him to immediate action. He ordered his chariot; he took a first and last view of the sleeping infant and its mother, and he tore himself away for ever.

The former visions were prepared by his good genius. He has now to encounter the spirit of evil, *Mara*, who appears in the sky urging him to forbear, promising him in seven days a universal kingdom over the four great continents, if he will give up his resolve. The tempter fails, but does not abandon the attempt, saying sooner or later some hurtful or malignant thought will arise in his mind, and I shall be his master.

He has to pass through a second struggle. The tempter and his angels surround him in the midst of the most appalling convulsions of nature, and he remains unmoved in the storm.

Mr. Rhys Davids,* from whose work I have taken these last details, points out the resemblance between these scenes of temptation and those which, in *Paradise Regained*, beset our Lord in the wilderness, where, you know, Milton lays the scene of our Saviour's victory, and not on Calvary. It may be also compared with the temptations of St. Antony

* Buddhism: a Sketch of the Life and Teaching of Gautama, the Buddha. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. London.

and other mediæval legends, in which the saints are assailed by demons and similar portents.

The history of his temptations is told at great length in the *Lalita vistara*, the moral of this part of the story being to contrast the system of the Brahmins with that of the reformer. They occur when he is approaching the crisis of his career, and has experienced the nothingness of the austerities he has undergone for six years. The different practices then in vogue had been tried, in order, it is said, that he might expose the futility of any such means of extinguishing passion or desire, or of attaining to the holy calm, which is the aim of the new teaching. His body had now been reduced to the last stage of emaciation. There is alarm in heaven lest he should die, and his mother descends to persuade him to live, and fulfil his destiny. He consoles her, but perseveres. And now, at this last stage, the demon Papiyan (the wicked one), who has been watching his occasion, addresses him as follows:—

“Dear creature, you must live. It is only in living you can practise the law. You are emaciated; you march towards death. Present your offerings in the fire of sacrifice. Whatever be your merits, what will result from your renunciation?”

Siddharta replies:—

“Papiyan, supporter of all delusions, have you come here to try me? Death is the inevitable end of life; why should I avoid it? I have courage and resolution that nothing will shake. Demon! soon shall I triumph over thee. Desires are thy first soldiers; sorrows are thy second; hunger and thirst the next; passions are the fourth. Then follow indolence and fears, and doubts and rage, hypocrisy and ambition, flattery, false renown, and vanity. These are thy black allies, the soldiers of the burning demon. They subdue the gods as well as the world. I shall overcome them by wisdom; and then malignant spirit, what wilt thou?”

The demon retires from the conflict humiliated, and Siddharta is described as renewing his reflections on the false paths of the Brahmins, which will not put a term to

birth, old age, death, or the miseries of life. He finally resolves that it is not by exhausting his body that his knowledge will be perfected. "I will take food," he says, "and my bodily strength will revive, and I shall arrive at the throne of wisdom."*

So supported, he enters on a new series of conflicts. The demon holds a council, after the manner of Milton and Tasso. He brings an army of monsters into the field, that change their form at every step, but are overthrown by a series of prodigies. He returns again to the conflict; and the saint is finally assailed by the daughters of the evil one, whose blandishments were as futile as the other weapons employed. Papiyan retires in despair, and declares "My empire has passed away!"

The gods, who have watched the battle with eagerness, uttering cries of joy at each successive victory, now come to render their homage and strengthen his resolutions. The reader is kept in suspense owing to the hesitation felt by the Buddha, whether, after arriving at the supreme wisdom, he will be equal to the great work; but finally, touched by pity for mankind, he consents to "turn the wheel of the law," and there is great joy among the gods at the announcement.

Beneath these fables lies a true story. They describe the wrestlings of a mind that could find no peace under the Brahminical observances and practices, and the final solution of his difficulties, after a meditation of several days under an Indian fig-tree, which afterwards bore the name of

* Ritter, in his *History of Philosophy*, compares the language of Mandanes, the Indian, addressed to Onesicritus, as reported by Strabo (xv.), in which the former declared that the best philosophy was that which invigorated the mind by strengthening the body, to a passage in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, quoted by Mr. Colebrooke in his *Essay on the Vedas*, in which Varuna is described as instructing his son that Brahma is to be identified successively with food, breath, intellect, and felicity. The doctrine of Mandanes is in reality that propounded by Buddha, in the *Lalita vistara*, during these trials. The food in the *Upanishad* is evidently the sacrificial food which feeds the gods, and the doctrine of Brahma is mixed up with the ritualistic ideas of the day.

the Tree of Wisdom,* and which, as remarked by Mr. Davids, became as much an emblem of the new faith as the cross among Christians, and was treated in after-ages with the same superstitious reverence. In the seventh century of our era, that is, twelve hundred years after the death of Buddha, a Chinese pilgrim, whose narrative has come down to us, visited the holy spot, and found a tree, surrounded by a brick inclosure and carefully guarded, which was pointed out to him as the very tree under which the great drama was enacted.

Some of the legends are avowedly allegorical, and they all may be assumed to represent his doctrine and moral teaching. For example, the army of demons, horrible in their transformations, are supposed to represent the illusions of this life. The following is the commentary in the original work:—

“The pure being knows that this is the effect of illusion, that there is neither demon, nor force, nor the universe, nor identity; that the three worlds pass on like the image of the moon in water; that there is neither eye, nor man, nor woman, nor personality. Hearing, smell, taste, and touch, as also the creator of the substance (universal, all), are born, resting on a cause. Within, all is void; without, all is void.”

This strange doctrine, which not merely dethrones God, but destroys the individuality of man, lies at the root of the system, and is put forward more elaborately and precisely, in the record of his teaching. This is the revolting side of Buddhism. I turn for relief to his moral teaching. It will appear strange to you that the highest rules of moral conduct and duty to man should have sprung from a system which denies every sanction to moral duties, except what are to be gathered from the most selfish considerations. But this is one of the strange phenomena which this strange

* Commonly called the Bo-tree (properly Bodhidruma). It figures in the usual representations of the saint, who appears everywhere in the act of meditation.

history presents to us. Possibly, it may have its explanation in the condition of society, under the influence of the ritualistic teaching, which it was the object of Buddha to overthrow. On this point history is silent, and I will not waste your time with conjectures.

I have said that his moral teaching was of the highest order. All who have risen from the study vie with each other in enthusiastic praise. St. Hilaire (*Buddha et sa Religion*) says, "I do not hesitate to declare that, with the exception of Christ himself, there exists not among the founders of religions a figure more pure or more attractive than that of Buddha. His heroism was equal to his conviction, and though his theory be false, his personal example is without reproach. It is the perfect model of all the virtues that he preached."

Mrs. Spiers (*Ancient India*) "could almost imagine that, before God planted Christianity, he took a branch from the luxuriant tree and threw it down to India."

Spence Hardy (*Manual of Buddhism*) says, "A collection might be made from the precepts of this work (the *Dhammapadam*), that, in the purity of its ethics, could scarcely be equalled by any other heathen writer."

Knighton, in his *History of Ceylon*, says, "In it we have exemplified a code of morality and a list of precepts which for pureness, excellence, and wisdom, is only second to that of the divine Lawgiver himself."

Much is related of his life and teaching, during the forty years of his mission. We have traditions of his wanderings, his mode of dividing his time, his parables and discourses, and the marvellous conversions effected by him, and, finally, the circumstances attending his death. The Lalita vistara comes to an end when his preaching begins, and we are dependent for these latter facts on fragmentary notices, derived from Ceylon, Burmah, &c. It is not so with his moral code. It is embodied in certain systematic treatises, which are supposed to have been recorded after his death, and compiled, under the sanction of an ecclesiastical council,

held in the reign of Asoka, about 200 years after his death. It is to the character of this new and higher morality that I ask your especial attention.

Under the new law, the aim of life was not merely to abstain from the grosser sins of our nature, but to encourage purity of thought, gentleness of spirit and of speech, and boundless love to our fellow-creatures, and to all beings. To the last, he inculcated reverence for the Brahmins; but he taught a higher morality. The great commandments of this religion are eight in number. Four of them are directed against the besetting sins of mankind—murder, theft, adultery, and telling lies. A fifth would meet the approval of many of my friends: "One should not become a drinker of intoxicating drinks." Then follow precepts regarding food, the wearing of garlands, and use of perfumery, and against luxurious beds: "One should sleep on a mat spread on the ground."

Mr. Spence Hardy, in that part of his *Manual of Buddhism* which refers to the ethical teaching, gives a multitude of precepts; but those which head the list correspond with the above. It may be noted that his commandments admit of a classification different from that of the decalogue. Whereas the latter comprise two great laws—duty to God and duty to one's neighbour, those of the Indian teacher are divided between duty to one's neighbour and duty to one's self; for the teaching was eminently atheistic. In Spence Hardy's work they are classified thus: There are three sins of the body—murder, theft, adultery. Four of the speech—lying, slander, abuse, unprofitable conversation. Three of the mind—covetousness, malice, scepticism. There are five other evils to be avoided—drinking of intoxicating liquors, gambling, idleness, improper association, frequenting places of amusement; special obligations are enjoined, such as the relation of parent and child, husband and wife, master and servant, teacher and scholar, priest and householder, and friend.

These rules, and they are very numerous and very minute,

convey a very imperfect notion of the spirit of the teaching of this great reformer. The virtues inculcated were not merely those of self-restraint, but of the most active and expansive character. Charity is not merely almsgiving, though that is strongly enjoined, but love, calling for the greatest sacrifices. There is a ridiculous legend of the great teacher having, in a former existence, (and he is supposed to have passed through many thousands of existences before his last appearance), given his body to be devoured by a famishing tigress and its whelps. On another occasion he tears off a portion of his own flesh to feed a hawk that was pursuing a dove. Again, a disciple throws himself into the sea to appease an offended deity, who has raised a storm, and thus saves his companions. Some of these legends were commemorated by monuments, and described by pilgrims in later times.

Again, he is not content with forbidding lying, but his disciples must avoid all grossness of language, the repetition of any idle talk which may set men at enmity among themselves, and be eminently peace-makers.

His injunctions of humility are very remarkable. His followers must not only be humble in conduct, but in mind. In one of his parables, a blind man discourses very ignorantly on what he has never seen; but on receiving his sight he discourses with folly and vanity on his newly acquired knowledge. All pride and vanity, in the new teaching, should be expelled from the human heart. It was with a view to eradicate these vices that confession was enjoined on all his followers, and especially on the monks. Twice a month they were to confess their sins before the whole assembled body. To what extent it was practised by the people at large seems uncertain. In an edict of Asoka, a prince who reigned in northern and central India 200 or 300 years after the time of Buddha, confession is enjoined on all his subjects at least every five years; and the practice is supposed to have been followed long after this period.

This rule of life is beautifully expressed in a speech that is attributed to him. He was invited by a king to silence his adversaries by performing some miracle, and he replied:—

“O great king, I do not teach the law by directing my disciples to go before the Brahmans and householders and perform some miracle, greater than has ever been done by man; but I say, Pass your lives, O my followers, in concealing your good works and in exposing your sins.”

I subjoin a few extracts from the “Scripture verses” which form the manual of the faithful. They are translated in Mr. Rhys Davids’ work:—

He who holds back rising anger as (one might) a rolling chariot.
Him indeed I call a driver; others only hold the reins.
Let a man overcome anger by kindness, evil by good.
Let him conquer the stingy by a gift, the liar by truth.
Let him speak the truth; let him not yield to anger.
Let him give when asked, even from the little he has!
By these three things he will enter the presence of the gods.

The following will remind you of the 19th Psalm:—

The gift of the law exceeds all gifts.
The sweetness of the law exceeds all sweetness.
The delight of the law exceeds all delight.
The extinction of thirst overcomes all grief.

The following is taken from another collection of maxims (“a man’s a man for a’ that”):—

Not by birth does one become low caste.
Not by birth does one become a Brahman.
By his actions alone one becomes low caste.
By his actions alone one becomes a Brahman.

I must add one more specimen of his teaching from another book of maxims:—

Anger, drunkenness, obstinacy, bigotry, deception, envy, self-praise, disparaging others, high-mindedness, evil communications, these constitute uncleanness; not verily the eating of flesh.

Any person who followed his teaching and entered on "the Path" which leads to nirvana, the ultimate hope of the believer, had his reward in this life. There are several degrees of *Dhyana*, which is the term applied to the mental condition to which the devotee may arrive, carrying with it a holy calm, the fruit of knowledge and the extinction of passion and desire. He has also the hope that the fruit of his good deeds will follow him in the future existences into which he may enter. But the goal to which he is taught ultimately to look is the *nirvana*. When the soul is sufficiently purged of its earthly trammels, it may, in the course of generations, so overcome the chain which binds it to the world as to enter into a state of rest which cannot readily be distinguished from eternal sleep.

Great difference of opinion exists among Europeans as to the sense in which this word *nirvana* is used by the Buddhists, and Mr. Rhys Davids, at the conclusion of the chapter in which he treats of it, refers to some fourteen works in which it is dealt with, in some, very elaborately. It means, literally, blowing out, and it may be understood as the blowing out of our desires or passions, or the extinction of existence. There are indeed, among the numerous passages quoted from the Sanscrit or Pali in this controversy, some that may bear either interpretation. All agree that it is used in the sense of profound calm. If we look to the metaphysics of the system, the individual disappears in the process, and the candle (to use a favourite simile in their teaching) cannot be lighted again. It is on this blissful state of repose that Buddhist writings dwell with awe and enthusiasm, and the praises that are lavished upon it seem to me inconsistent with the idea of annihilation. Certain it is that the path that leads to it is holiness of life and extinction of desires, and the hope is that of unruffled rest, in which the world and its desires are left behind.*

* "The etymology is from *vā*, to blow as the wind, with the prepositive *nir* used in a negative sense; it means calm and unruffled." This is Mr. Colebrooke's explanation. Mr. Childers in his article on Nibbāna in his Pali dictionary says, Nirvāna is applied to two different things: first, that annihilation of

It is customary to speak with compassion of these hopes of the Buddhist. Perpetual calm or apathy seems unnatural to the earnest active nature of the western world; but this state of ultimate bliss (*ananda*) is that to which the Indian aspires, and in this, so we are informed by Mr. Colebrooke, the Jaina as well as the Bauddha concur with the orthodox Vedantin. To seek repose in the grave has been the yearning of many minds. Let us remember that in one text of Scripture that will be familiar to you, rest is spoken of as the hope of the righteous. "There remaineth a *rest** to the people of God." Remember too that Job in his affliction yearns for the grave, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at *rest*." So too our great dramatic poet puts the same sentiment in the speech of one who was about to seek relief in a violent death from his agony at the loss of all he held dear,

"Here will I set up my everlasting *rest*,
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world-wearied flesh."

The cry is one of suffering humanity in all ages and countries. What is strange is to find it elevated into a creed as the only solution of what to the Buddhists appeared the unspeakable miseries of human life.

Such was the religion which became for a time the dominant faith of northern India. It excited the enthusiasm of its professors, who sought to convert the world. Buddhist missionaries penetrated into China in the first century of our era, and in the course of 200 years it became the established faith of the country, and from thence spread to all adjoining countries.

In this religion there was no room for a god.

Brahminism with its rites and sacrifices was pushed aside.

being which is the goal of Buddhism; and, secondly, the state of blissful sanctification called *arahatta* or arhatship, which terminates in annihilation."

* The word in the original is the keeping of a Sabbath (*σαββατισμος*), the comparison being carried out by St. Paul between the rest promised to the children of Israel and the hopes of the Christian.

The dominion of the priestly race was overthrown, and with it all caste-distinction as part of religion.

The new doctrine affirmed the equality of man as regards his everlasting being. As every human being was subject to an inexorable destiny which impelled all mankind in this dreary course, so it was in his power to work out his own release if he followed the rule of Buddha, the pursuit of good, and abstraction from the world. There was something grand in the idea. The ancient Stoic held that a man might rise superior to fate. He might maintain such a loftiness of mind as to be happy in the shocks of fortune, and the wreck of the world, but he could not escape from it. Death and the inevitable future lay before him, and he must submit to the law which governed the world. The Indian reformer professed to teach a way by which a man could control his fate, and burst through the ordinary laws of his being.

To complete the sketch of the new religious system which had such influence in the world, something remains to be said of the strange metaphysical doctrines that are mixed up with the moral teaching. As a system of ethics it occupies the highest place; so high indeed that there have not been wanting those who have contended that our Saviour's teaching was but in imitation of one who lived more than five centuries previously. The points of resemblance are very striking, many of the incidents in the legendary life of Buddha and the record of his teaching being similar to certain events in the gospel history. Some have been mentioned above—the miraculous conception, the prophecy of the Indian Simeon, and the scenes of his temptation. We also read of his teaching by parables, sending forth sixty disciples to preach the law, and his multiplying the viands at a marriage feast.

The Rev. E. J. Eitel, in his lectures on Buddhism, enumerates eleven incidents in the legendary life of Buddha which resemble similar events in the gospel histories. To obviate any conclusions unfavourable to the gospel narrative the author contends that these legends cannot be proved to

have been in circulation earlier than the fifth or sixth century A.D. This is perhaps assuming too much; great uncertainty no doubt exists as to the date at which the more ancient Buddhistic works were composed. But I think it unnecessary to pursue the comparison, for the resemblance is, in many of the given instances, more apparent than real. With regard, however, to some of the Buddhistic legends, there seems to have been some interchange of tradition between the East and West. Thus, it is pointed out by Mr. Beale, in his legendary life of Buddha, that the story in the Apocryphal Gospel of the infancy of our Lord, regarding his instruction in the alphabet, is the counterpart of a Chinese legend of the youthful prince, who gives utterance to the proper sound of each particular letter "in virtue of his supreme wisdom." So also Buddha's descent into hell is said to resemble the story of our Saviour's descent as represented in the Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus.

Another and more curious instance is given by Max Müller in a paper on the migration of fables in the *Contemporary Review* for July, 1870. The legend of "the great renunciation" is bodily introduced into a Christian romance of the eighth century by a certain St. John of Damascus. The father of the hero is a king, who is alarmed by the prediction of an astrologer that his new-born child will rise to glory, not, however, in his father's kingdom, but in a higher and better one, that, in fact, he will embrace Christianity. Everything is done to prevent this; he is kept in a beautiful palace, surrounded by every luxury, and great care is taken to keep him in ignorance of sickness, old age, and death. Like the young Siddharta, he takes three drives, and sees successively a maimed and a blind man, and then a man in extreme old age. He puts questions to his driver as to these appearances, and on receiving from him the natural explanation, he returns home very sad. On the third occasion he meets a hermit, who opens to him a higher life in the gospel of Christ. There are other points of resemblance between the Christian legend and the story of

Buddha, but none so marked as the above. The book which bears the title of "The Life of Barlaam and Joasaph," and was intended to convey a simple exposition of Christian doctrine, consists mainly of a series of discourses addressed to the prince Joasaph. It became so popular in the middle ages that it was translated into several languages, and it is added by Max Müller that the hero was canonized—in the Eastern Church, the 26th August being the festival of Barlaam and Josephat, in the Roman calendar the 27th November being assigned to St. Josaphat.*

There is still less reason to ground any inferences unfavourable to Christian teaching on the fact of its resemblance, in many respects, to that of Buddha; for there is nothing to raise a sceptical doubt in the discovery that the noblest views regarding man's duty to man have been entertained by good heathens in ancient times. It is indeed admitted that some of those maxims which we regard as peculiarly Christian are to be found in the works of heathen moralists. If the two religions are to be compared together as moral systems they must be regarded, each as it supplies the means and motive to this one end, and be judged according to its fitness and power to regenerate mankind.

While on this subject I am tempted to quote the following excellent remarks by Bishop Bigandet, in the appendix to his life of Buddha. "The Christian system and the Buddhistic one, though differing from each other in the respective objects and ends, as much as truth from error, have, it must be confessed, many striking features of an astonishing resemblance. There are many moral precepts equally commanded and enforced in common in both creeds. It will not be deemed rash to assert that most of the moral truths prescribed by the gospel are to met with in the Buddhistic scriptures. The essential, vital, and capital discrepancy lies in the difference of the ends the two creeds lead to, but not in the variance of the means they prescribe for

* I do not find this confirmed in any modern Roman calendar that I have consulted. Colonel Yule, in a note to his edition of *Marco Polo*, mentions some mediæval lives of saints and martyrologies where the story is told.

the attainment of them." He proceeds to point out that the tendency of the gospel is to reunite man to his maker, and teach him to conform his will to His commands. Buddhism, he adds, tends to abstract man from all that is without self, and to practise the most eminent virtues with a view to arrive at the incomprehensible state of Neibhan. And further on he remarks, "In reading the particulars of the last Buddha Gaudama,* it is impossible not to feel reminded of many circumstances relating to our Saviour's life, such as has been sketched out by the evangelists."†

As regards Buddhism, there is another side of the picture to be presented to you. It can only be thoroughly understood by adverting to some points in the system in which it resembled or borrowed from the religious or speculative opinion of the day. India has developed certain systems of philosophy, and it has been a question whether Buddhism has not borrowed from one or other of these schools. There are certain leading doctrines that run through them all. This is a subject that I had occasion to point out in the life of my father, and I had better quote the passage.

"The belief in transmigration, accompanied by a painful sense of the lot of man on earth, forms the basis of the metaphysical speculations of the Hindus. Even Buddhism forms no exception to this. All the Indian systems agree in seeking knowledge which shall enable its possessor to escape from this dreary destiny. The soul is in bondage; and bondage implies suffering; good works, no less than bad, lead to bondage, since they have their requital in the transmigration, and a return to its alliance with its earthly and intellectual nature. Hence the imperfection of religious rites, since they afford only a temporary release from the ills of life. The great arcanum is knowledge, or a right perception of the soul's relation to the world or to God. In solving this problem, the sys-

* Gaudama, or Gautama, so often applied to him, is a patronymic, and means a descendant of Gotama, a remote ancestor. Sakya Muni, also frequently employed, means Sakya the sage or monk (*μῆνός*). In the legends of his life he is generally described by epithets, as Bhagavat, the blessed, or Bodddhisatwa, he who has acquired the wisdom of a Buddha.

† The Life or Legend of Gaudama. P. 499.

tems diverge, as might be supposed, into a great variety of speculations; but the tendency is the same, viz., to a sort of quietism, with more or less of mystical teaching. In discussing these questions we are led through a series of physical and metaphysical speculations. The laws of thought and of reasoning, the sources of our knowledge, whether derived from the senses or from the external world, or from perception, all come under view, and are subject to minute examination, the conclusion with some being in favour of the separate existence of the soul, and with others of its identity with the soul of the universe. The recognition of one or other of these doctrines is the first step to emancipation, complete release being effected by meditation or abstraction. This doctrine of '*mukti*' or emancipation is reconciled with pantheism or atheism, with tenets bordering on materialism, or even with the denial of the existence of a material world; none of which affect the result, that 'a happy state of imperturbable apathy is the ultimate bliss to which the Indian aspires.' Creeds the most opposed, as Brahminism and Buddhism, concur in some of the essential tenets, though, as might be supposed, the metaphysical views of the jarring sects afford materials for endless and bitter controversy."

You will perceive that you are dealing with a people whose intellectual, moral, and religious opinions have run a course altogether different from what we have experience of in ancient or modern Europe. The history of the rise of the belief in the transmigration of souls, which lies at the base of it, is obscure. It was unknown to the composers of the Vedic hymns. We find it fully developed in the code of Menu. It more or less pervades the Upanishads. The intervening period was one of intellectual stagnation unfavourable to the growth of any elevated ideas regarding God. It was at such a time that the belief in the passage of the soul after death into other bodies took its rise.* The same belief has been entertained by other nations, as by the ancient Egyptians, and even the Peruvians. It is the rudest conception of immortality derived from the analogy of the decay and reproduction of material things, and may

* Professor Monier Williams (*Indian Wisdom*, p. 68) says that it begins to appear, though not clearly defined, in the Brahmanas.

be regarded as a refined extension of the notion of metamorphism which forms a popular belief in many rude and especially in eastern nations. In treating on this subject in a former publication I remarked:—

“Whatever may have been the origin of the belief in the migration of the soul, as connected with a system of retribution, it must have found great support in the interest of a priesthood whose influence it increased ; for, as the ills of life became connected with the sins of a former existence, the importance of expiations and austerities which form a part of the Brahminical religion became greatly enhanced. To this we must add the gloomy view of man’s existence on earth, which lies at the root of the religious sentiments of the people, before we can form a conception of the hold which this doctrine acquired over the Indian mind.

“The return of the soul to earth to inhabit new forms, might have been consistent with a cheerful view of life ; but when the soul returned laden with the troubles of a former existence, and to encounter new trials, the result must have been favourable to the most gloomy superstition, and may account, in some measure, for the ascendancy acquired by the Brahmins.”

It is always to be borne in mind that, in the transmigration, the soul might enter an inferior animal, or even become a stock or a stone. The Buddhists carried their views to this last extreme, and the founder of the religion is said to have pointed out to his disciples a wall, a column, flowers, and even a broom, that had formerly been human beings, and had undergone this transformation, as punishments for offences in life.* The broom, it seems, represented an unfortunate sweeper who had neglected to keep clean some sacred place. That the soul may, in its future life, descend in the scale of existence, as a punishment for acts done in the body, is a popular belief in India in the present day. This doctrine being once established it does not seem very unnatural to seek an escape from a future so full of uncer-

* The ancient Egyptians held that, after the dissolution of the body, the soul immediately enters some other animal, and that after passing through every species of land, water, or winged creatures it returns again to a human body.—*Herod.* ii. 123.

tainty or woe. The growth of the belief remains to be accounted for, and its rise cannot be traced in the literature of India. There have been several theories to explain its rise, none very satisfactory. Professor Weber, quoted by Dr. Muir (*Sanskrit Texts*, v. 322), considers that, to men of the mild disposition and reflective spirit of the Indians, it would not appear that reward and punishment could be eternal, and that the dogma of transmigration was invented to meet the difficulty of either supposition. He supposes that it was not regarded as a complete solution, and that the knot was finally cut by complete redemption from the bondage of the world and of individual existence, and that this mode of cutting the knot was the work of Buddha and Buddhism. I give the theory without comment; and, instead of adding any speculations of my own on so obscure a question, I will give you an example of the way in which the question of future hopes and rewards was regarded in the old time. It is an episode from the great epic, the *Mahabharata*, quoted by Dr. Muir in the same volume of his *Sanskrit Texts* which I have referred to above.

A sage named Mudgala, after a life of holiness and trial, is visited by a messenger from the gods, who invites him to enter his celestial car, and ascend to heaven. The sage desires first to learn the advantages and drawbacks of the heavenly state. The messenger proceeds to explain that the celestial abodes are intended for those who have performed austerities or celebrated great sacrifices, for the truthful, the orthodox, the righteous, the self-restrained, the meek, the liberal, the brave, &c. There hunger, thirst, weariness, cold, heat, fear, are unknown. There is no sorrow, nor lamentation, nor decay, nor labour, nor envy, nor jealousy, nor delusion. There the blessed are clothed in glorious bodies, produced by their works, and their garments are fragrant and unfading. Beyond these regions are others of a higher character, to which the rishis who have been purified by their works proceed, and further on is a higher region, desired even by the gods, which is now within Mud-

gala's reach, the fruit of his good deeds. But there is a drawback to all this. As the fruit of works done on earth is enjoyed in heaven, whilst no other new works are performed there, from which new rewards could spring, this enjoyment must come to an end; for this world is the place for works, the other for reward. This loss of gratifications, to which the heart has become devoted, and the pain which arises in the minds of those who have sunk to a lower state from beholding the enjoyment of others is said to be intolerable.* To this must be added the bewilderment of those who descend, and the fears they experience when their garlands begin to fade. Such are the defects of all existence till it is absorbed in Brahma. The messenger adds that something still remains to those who have fallen. As a result of good deeds, they are born in a state of happiness, though still liable, if they relax in their vigilance, to fall lower.

The messenger of the gods after this explanation invites the saint to accompany him. But, after consideration, he replies that he will have nothing to do with a state of happiness vitiated by such defects, and followed by such misery, and he will only seek the eternal abode where there is no sorrow, nor distress, nor change, and he asks the messenger whether there is any sphere free from all defects; and he is told that, above the abode of Brahma, is the pure ethereal light, the abode of Vishnu. Those only can proceed there whose senses are under restraint, and who practise contemplation, and fix their minds on the deity. The sage then dismisses the messenger, begins to practise ascetic virtues, becoming indifferent to praise and blame, regarding clods, stones, and gold as alike. Pure knowledge led to fixed contemplation; and that again imparted strength and complete

A/

* Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordar del tempo felice
Nella miseria . . .

—Dante. *Inferno*, v.

Or according to the paraphrase of Tennyson,

This is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

comprehension, whereby he attained supreme eternal perfection, in the nature of quietude (*nirvana*).

These sad views regarding life and the transmigration were what the young Siddharta recognized and adopted, as lying at the base of the popular creed. It was the one matter of faith that was accepted without dispute under the new teaching. The release from bondage was to be effected by the power of works, in lieu of the penances and observances of the existing creed, and the mysterious doctrine of Brahma taught in the Upanishads; and this was to be open to all. As the doctrine of transmigration follows the analogy of material things, so, we may suppose, the doctrine of the power of the good or evil done in life following a person in a future state, may have suggested itself as analogous to what occurs around us. Nothing dies. Habits formed during life follow us to our grave, and perhaps beyond it. The sins of the fathers are certainly often visited on their children, and Buddha in preaching the inherent efficacy of works as a law of nature, and founding his whole system upon it, must have met with a response in the hearts of those who knew no other teaching than the creed of the Brahmins. His merit was indubitable, and had he stopped here the new faith would at least have been intelligible, and excited our utmost sympathies.

Unfortunately the age was one of dialectics and metaphysical refinements. The revelation was of a dogma regarding the soul which was to supersede the inner doctrines of the Upanishads; and this can only be represented in the language of the new creed. There is no attempt to solve the question of the origin of evil; any notion of superhuman and overruling power is simply set aside. Nothing is left but a chain of causes, and cause is mere sequence. Birth is the cause of death, and of all the miseries of life. The cause of birth is previous existence, and the cause of existence is attachment or clinging to pleasure or the dread of pain. The great truths of the new gospel are supposed to have been arrived at during the profound meditation under the fig-

tree, and fought out against the war of demons. They run as follows.* Pain comes from birth, old age, sickness, and death, from union with what one loves not, and separation from that one hates. The origin of pain is the thirst of existence, and the desire of pleasure. The cessation of pain comes from the extinction of this thirst and of all passion and desire. The way which leads to this cessation is eight-fold, and this is explained to be right views, right feelings, right words, right behaviour, right models of livelihood, right exertion, right meditation, and tranquillity.

This is all very edifying, and we may suppose that we have reached some sound and practical teaching when we find ourselves bewildered by some metaphysical jargon about evil being the result of ignorance, and the great solution arising from right perception regarding the nothingness of existence, and the delusions of our being.

Without following those abstractions, which are given in detail in all accounts of the doctrine, I will offer you a single specimen of his teaching as it is given in his sermon on the mount, one of the first of his discourses. I take the summary from Rhys Davids' work. It may be studied at more length in Bishop Bigandet's life of Buddha, where each sense is described as a burning flame, fed by the fire of concupiscence, anger, ignorance, birth, old age, death, anxiety, tears, affliction, and trouble.

"The new disciples, who had been worshippers of Agni, the sacred fire, were seated with Gautama on the Elephant Rock, near Gaya, with the beautiful valley of Rajagriha stretched out before them, when a fire broke out in the jungle on the opposite hill. Taking the fire as his text, the teacher declared that so long as men remained in ignorance they were, as it were, consumed by a fire, by the excitement produced within them by the action of external things. These things acted upon them through the five senses and the heart (which Gautama regarded as a sixth organ of sense). The eye, for instance, perceives objects; from this perception arises an inward sensation producing pleasure or pain.

* Foucaux's *Lalita Vistara* p. 392. a /

Sensations produce this misery and joy, because they supply fuel, as it were, to the inward fires, concupiscence, anger, and ignorance, and the anxieties of birth, decay, and death. The same was declared to be the case with the sensations produced by each of the other senses. But those who follow Buddha's scheme of inward self-control—the four stages of the path whose gate is purity, and whose goal is love—have become wise; the sensations from without no longer give fuel to the inward fire, since the fires of concupiscence, &c., have ceased to burn. True disciples are thus free from that craving thirst which is the origin of evil; the wisdom they have acquired will lead them on, sooner or later, to perfection; they are delivered from the miseries which would result from another birth, and even in this birth they no longer need the guidance of such laws, as those of caste, and ceremonies, and sacrifice, for they have already reached far beyond them."

This summary of his teaching is more intelligible than the dialectic form which it assumes in the traditional discourse, and in regard to which Bishop Bigandet justly observes that much of it is very obscure, and above the level of ordinary apprehension. It was adapted to the style of the day, but not to the millions who were not conquered by his metaphysics, but by his teaching of love and duty to our fellow-men, and by the breadth of his sympathies for all beings. It is of course a matter of uncertainty how much of this represents the actual teaching of the founder of the religion, and how much was the after-growth of doctrinal theology. This we have not the means of deciding. It is enough to know that the conquest was decisive, and the old superstitions were overthrown.

As to the extent to which it prevailed in India we have imperfect means of judging. At one time it was the dominant faith in the north. Some interesting inscriptions have been deciphered within the last thirty years, which throw light on this subject. Rock inscriptions in an unknown character were known to exist in Cuttack, in Guzerat, and beyond the Indus. But when the north-west became open to our researches numerous coins were discovered in the

same character, and Mr. J. Prinsep, by one of those happy guesses which guide men of genius, was able to supply the key, *i.e.* discover the alphabet. The letters so found enabled him, not merely to decipher these coins and restore the names and titles of dynasties that have passed away, but to interpret these inscriptions. They were found to be the pious records of a king who reigned in the third century B.C., who desired to inculcate some of the precepts of the new faith, especially tenderness to all animals, human and brute.

I am entering here on controverted matter; for it has been questioned by H. H. Wilson, one of the most eminent oriental scholars of the day, whether they belonged to Asoka, and whether they were especially Buddhistic. I do not think he would hold these views now. Whether or not they belonged to the teaching of Buddha, they were certainly opposed to the old doctrines, and show that the religious views of a large portion of India had undergone a great change. This is admitted by Wilson, who thus describes their character. After referring to many religious or philosophical bodies, besides the Buddhists, who do not recognize the authority of the Vedas as infallible, but rather draw from them doctrines which tend to set aside the necessity of mere formal ceremonies, he adds:—

“And this, in fact, appears to be the main object of all the edicts whether on the rocks or on the pillars, the exaltation over all ceremonial practices, over a religion of rites, of the observance of moral obligations; the enjoining, in preference to the sacrifice of animals, the obedience to parents, affection for children, friends, and dependants, reverence for elders, Sramans, and Brahmans, universal benevolence and unreserved toleration.”*

I wish that the time at my command would allow me to quote at length some of these edicts, for they are very curious. In one of them the king proclaims that since he has arrived at the true insight, he has abandoned the recre-

* Journal, Royal Asiatic Society, vol. xii.

ations of former kings, including journeys of pleasure and the pursuit of animals in the chase, and that his greatest glory is in the pursuit of righteousness. In another he informs the world that the system of care for men and cattle followed by him has been extended through his dominions to neighbouring countries, which are named, and to the kingdom of Antiochus, the Grecian king; and that with this view he has planted useful healing plants for man and beast, and wells have been dug, and trees planted by the roadside; and above all, he inculcates tolerance to those of other faiths. This last is probably the most remarkable, and we may conclude from it that Buddhism was not in complete ascendancy. But it also confirms what we know from other sources, that the missionaries of the faith sought to extend it by persuasion only.*

* These inscriptions are fourteen in number. That regarding toleration runs as follows. I give the version from Burgess's *Archæological Survey of Western India*:—"Priyadasi, the king dear to the gods, desires that everywhere the ascetics of all persuasions should remain (in peace). They all desire the regulation that they exercise upon themselves and purity of soul; but people have different opinions, and different likings, (and) the ascetics obtain whether the whole, or whether a part only (of what they ask). Nevertheless for himself, to whom there reaches not a large alms, the empire over himself, purity of mind, knowledge, and firm devotion, which lasts for ever; this is good."

Toleration is set forth in greater length in Edict XII. The moral is that "no man may praise his own sect or condemn another sect, or despise it on unsuitable occasions. On all manner of occasions let respect be shown."

Edict IX. is one of the most interesting as an exposition of religious views, and is aimed apparently at the superstitious practices current:—"King Priyadasi, beloved of the gods, speaks thus. It is a fact that men do all kinds of things that are thought to assure luck, as well in sicknesses as at betrothals and marriages; at the getting of children or at going from home. On these and other occasions men do all kinds of things that are thought to bring prosperity. But he is a great fool who does all those manifold vain and useless things. This, however, does not indeed remove the necessity of a man's doing something which will bring prosperity; but such a kind as is named is of little use, while of great use is true piety. To that belongs proper treatment of servants and subordinates, sincere reverence for masters and elders, sincere self-restraint towards living beings, sincere charity to Brahmans and monks. Every man must hold that forth to others whether he is a father or son, a brother or lord—this is noble; this must a man do as something that assures luck."

Other and still more interesting records of Buddhistic India are to be found in the narratives of some Chinese pilgrims who visited the country at different periods from the fourth to the seventh centuries A.D., some of whose works have been translated into French. The last of these travellers, *Hiouen Thsang*, entered India by the north-west, traversed the north, and sailed for Ceylon. He describes India as divided into 138 kingdoms, of which he visited 110. Some of these were governed by heretics, but Buddhists abounded everywhere, and the number of convents and monks was enormous, and the sacred monuments so numerous that a large part of the work is taken up in their description. Indeed the work gives a very full account of the monasteries, holy places, legends, and the relics of which the holy land, the scene of the labours of the great teacher, was full. But many of the old edifices were in ruins, and the extent to which the Brahminical faith and other heresies prevailed, lead us to the conclusion that Buddhism was then on the decline, compared with the account of the state of India described by the first of these pilgrims 200 or 300 years before.

Some of the incidents related by *Hiouen Thsang* certainly show that the religion of Buddha was upheld with great vigour and enthusiasm at this later period. *Siladitya*, a powerful prince who reigned at *Canyacoubja*, the modern *Canouge*, distributed his alms and offerings on a scale which almost exceeds belief. Every three or five years the accumulated treasures and valuables were distributed among the religious orders and poor of his kingdom. The ceremony took place on a plain, near the modern *Allahabad*, and lasted nearly two months. Neighbouring potentates were invited to take part in the proceedings, which were conducted with great pomp, and they received presents from the king. The tolerance of the times was shown by the admission of Brahmins and heretics to a share in the general alms, special days being allotted to them, while the statues of the gods worshipped by the heretics were raised to places

of honour, each in their turn—a statue of Buddha presiding over the assembly at the beginning of the meeting, and afterwards that of the Sun, of Iswara, &c.

It is a very strange story; equally so is the account of a monastery where the pilgrim resided five years. It was erected on a place consecrated by an incident in Buddha's life, and within its precincts resided ten thousand monks and novices, all engaged in the study of all the sciences, including that of the Vedas, down to medicine and arithmetic. The building included vast halls for the purpose of conference, and a hundred lecture rooms. The study of divinity of course occupied the first place, and the schools were various, but admitted of two broad divisions of the greater and lesser vehicle.*

Our traveller was very superstitious and very credulous, and the book is full of legends and wonders. Stupas or monuments are, ~~as erected~~, erected over places notable for some incident in the founder's life, such as the well from which he drank, scenes of conversions and miracles, the place from which he ascended into heaven to teach "the law" to his mother, or where he entered into some controversy. The pilgrim is shown the seats that were occupied by former Buddhas; then we hear of a wonderful tree which enjoyed eternal youth, having sprung from a thrown away toothpick; and he describes various chasms of unexplored depth which opened to swallow up great sinners. He visits a cave near Peshawur where Buddha, after converting a dragon, left behind his shadow for the edification and encouragement in his new ways of his former pupil, and the cave had of

* The great Nalanda monastery has been identified by General Cunningham (Archæological Reports, vol. i. pp. 28–36). Mr. Ferguson referring to it says that six successive kings had built as many viharas on the same spot, when one of them surrounded the whole by a high wall which can be still traced. "What Cluny and Clairvaux were to France in the middle ages Nilanda was to Central India, the depository of all true learning and the foundation from which it spread over all the other lands of the faithful. From the existing remains General Cunningham draws a glowing picture of the splendour of its construction."—*Eastern Architecture*, p. 137.

course become a place of pilgrimage. After many prayers and vows the pilgrim was rewarded by the miraculous vision.

Notwithstanding these silly stories the book commands an interest from the light it throws on the state of India and the nature of the existing worship. The reverence for saints and relics was then at its height. There were many statues of Buddha. Two had been miraculously transported through the air, at the prayer of certain kings, a tale which reminds us of the miraculous conveyance of the house of the Virgin in Nazareth to Loretto in Italy. A reclining statue occupies the very place where he was said to have entered into nirvana. Relics of the saint, his near relatives, and faithful disciples abounded, and the impressions of his footsteps were numberless; but they were, for the most part, concealed by the monuments raised over them.

The worship, if it can be so called, was of a simple character, consisting of the offering of flowers at the statues and holy places, accompanied by something which it is difficult to distinguish between a prayer and a wish. Supernatural results were supposed to follow these acts of piety, and miraculous cures were said to be effected. The account which Hiouen Tshang gives of his visit to one of these statues will serve to illustrate this.

It was a celebrated place of pilgrimage and those who frequented it prepared garlands, which they presented after a fast of a week. They then approached the statue, which they were not allowed to touch; the garlands were thrown to the images, and if they lodged on the hands or arms it was a good omen, and the prayers or wishes were fulfilled. Hiouen Tshang brought three garlands, and accompanied the offering with three wishes—1st, for a happy return to his native land; 2nd, that he might reach the heaven of the Toshitas and serve Maitreya Bodhisitwa (a celebrated saint); and 3rd, that he might by the practice of virtue finally arrive at the full enlightenment and become a Buddha. He asked for the assurance that, if the garlands fell on the parts of the

body of the statue which he named, his wishes might be fulfilled. The garlands all fell on the places named. The pilgrim was transported with joy, and received the congratulations of the monks of the monastery who were the guardians of the place, and who pressed him to remember them in his day of bliss and assist them in their passage to "the other shore."

From this and other circumstances related by the Chinese pilgrims we may conclude that the religion of Buddha, though still retaining much vigour, and widely spread in India in the seventh century of our era, had undergone a great change, and had become almost as formal and superstitious as that which it had so largely superseded. According to the view of my friend Mr. Ferguson, whose works have thrown a flood of light on the history of the architecture of India, as of other countries, and who has published an interesting volume on the tree and serpent worship of India, these superstitions were, from an early period, incorporated into the Buddhist faith. The architectural remains of Buddhistic buildings certainly show signs of snake worship, and it is probable that this superstition continued to prevail in the creed of the vulgar after the rise of the new faith; and, in later times, it may have got the upper hand. In the opinion of Mr. Ferguson it was an aboriginal superstition in the north of India, and underlies not Buddhism only, but other rival faiths, as that of the Jains and the worship of Vishnu.

If Mr. Ferguson's opinions are correct Buddhism never existed as a pure faith among the millions, but was rather that of the educated and privileged classes. When the fervour of the new faith abated, and it was opposed by the Brahminical revival, these old superstitions cropped up and nearly superseded it. It is not necessary to enter further into this question. It is, however, important to keep in mind that this religion in its decline was very different from the pure doctrine preached by Sakya Muni.

The same architectural remains, so ably illustrated in Mr.

Ferguson's work, confirm the narrative of the Chinese traveller as to the number and size of the viharas or monasteries, as well as the stupas or mounds erected for the purpose of enshrining the relics of some saint, or commemorating some act in the history of the religion. This is a subject on which we are constantly receiving new information in the reports of the Archæological Surveys that have now been carried on for many years by General Cunningham and Mr. Burgess, under the direction of the Indian government.* Many of the so-called temples cut out of the rock that early attracted the attention of the English are now recognized as Buddhist monasteries with their halls and cells for the monks, and their elaborate carvings and frescoes, representing scenes from the life of Buddha, and legends of the saints.

As regards the topes or mounds, many of them are massive constructions, generally hemispherical, some of them being surrounded with carved railings and gateways, ornamented with sculptures,—perhaps the most remarkable being the Manikyala tope in the Punjab, which was first brought to notice by Mountstuart Elphinstone on the occasion of his embassy to Cabul. It forms a dome of 127 feet in diameter, ascended by four grand flights of steps. It was explored by General Ventura, and found to contain several sets of relics. That which appears to have been the most precious was deposited in a copper vessel, within which was a casket in brass, and that contained a smaller vessel in gold. Within was a brown liquid. On other occasions actual relics have been discovered enshrined in caskets. Those that were found in the famous Bhilsa group in Cen-

* Since this lecture was delivered I have seen in *The Times* a notice of a long-expected work by General Cunningham on the stupa of Bharhut in Central India. It was discovered by him in 1873, and is the most remarkable "find" that has rewarded the labours of this enthusiastic archæologist. The sculptures are said to be invaluable as illustrative of the legendary life of Buddha, and indeed of Indian life at the period when this structure was raised. The monument when perfect consisted of a dome 70 feet in diameter, surrounded by a railing with gateways covered with elaborate carvings.

tral India, are supposed to belong to certain Buddhist teachers who took part in the council held by Asoka.

From the narratives of these old travellers, and from the architectural remains, we may conclude that the worship of saints and relics had superseded the pure doctrine of the reformer. As the north of India was the holy land of the religion, pilgrims flocked in from all quarters to visit the scenes of the founder's exertions, and the relics that were enshrined there. We may readily believe that the monks who guarded them traded on the superstition and profited by it.

According to the received tradition, eight cities or kingdoms contended for the honour of possessing the remains of the reformer after his death, and the difficulty was overcome by dividing them. In all probability the reverence for relics was the growth of after ages. Certain it is there were never wanting relics to satisfy the craving for them, and some exist still. One tooth is at Ceylon, some of his hairs are kept at Rangoon, and his begging pot near Candahar.

But the change which the religion underwent is best illustrated by its condition in China, when that country became known to us in modern times. It had become so mixed with the grosser superstitions of the country, and so full of rite and ceremony, that it is said that the Jesuit missionaries, when, on their arrival, they saw its temples and its images, its gorgeous services and chants, its ringing of bells and holy water, its monasteries and convents, its shaven monks and rosaries, relics and pilgrimages, wrote home that the devil had been beforehand with them and taught the people all these things to prevent the introduction of Christianity.*

*M. Huc, in his *Travels in Tibet*, draws the following comparison between Buddhist and Roman Catholic ceremonials as they exist in the present day:—

“On ne peut s'empêcher d'être frappé de leur rapport avec le Catholicisme. La crosse, la mitre, la dalmatique, la chape ou pluvial, que les grands Lamas portent en voyage, ou lorsqu'ils font quelque cérémonie hors du temple; l'office à deux chœurs, la psalmodie, les exorcismes, l'encensoir soutenu par cinq chaînes, et pouvant s'ouvrir et se fermer à volonté; les bénédictions données par les

It has been contended that this showy worship was not inconsistent with the old doctrine of the founder of the faith, and only points to the high veneration in which he was held. It would be difficult to say to what extent this gorgeous ceremonial is accompanied, in the minds of the priests or the congregation, with the idea of worship. In a very glowing account of the service as it is conducted in Tibet, which will be found in Mr. Rhys Davids' volume, the ceremony culminates in a prayer for the presence of the spirit of all the Buddhas, and some holy water which has passed over a mirror, placed so as to catch the image of the spirit as it comes, is drunk reverently by the officiating monks. But, in this account, much of the ceremonial is evidently symbolic, and in no way represents the current views of the people. For them simpler forms are provided to meet the everyday wants of life; and Dr. Gutzlaff, in an interesting paper on the present state of Buddhism in China,* describes at some length the trade which is driven by the priests by acting on the hopes and fears of the multitude. To effect their purpose a special agency was provided. It is to be borne in mind that Buddhism, from the beginning, recognized the existence of supernatural influences. The gods of the Indian Pantheon were dethroned from their supremacy; but they continued to exist and do homage to the founder of the new faith, who taught a new and perfect way. It may be presumed that even in the palmy days of the religion there were not wanting those among its votaries who strove to propitiate the supernatural agencies by which they believed themselves to be surrounded. There is a tendency in our nature to compromise between God and the devil. Christianity itself was corrupted during the dark ages, and many of the converts from paganism retained some of their old

Lamas en étendant la main droite sur la tête des fidèles; le chapelet, le célibat ecclésiastique, les retraites spirituelles, le culte des saintes, les jeûnes, les processions, les litanies, l'eau bénite: voilà autant de rapports que les Bouddhistes ont avec nous."

* Journal Royal Asiatic Society, vol. xvi.

superstitions, as a belief in witches and fairies, and desired to be on good terms with the malevolent beings. To what extent a mixed religion prevailed in India we have imperfect means of judging; certain it is that in China the pure doctrine of Buddha is mixed with the grossest idolatry and superstition. It appears from the account of Dr. Gutzlaff that the images of Buddha are surrounded by a motley pantheon, some of the gods being benevolent beings, as the goddess of mercy and the queen of heaven. The latter is described as resembling in character and appearance the Virgin Mother of our Lord, so that the Chinese at Macao call her Santa Maria di China. There are besides gods of trades, of war, and justice, also various horrible demons. Dr. Gutzlaff adds that canonized founders of temples, deified heroes, and strange gods are promiscuously placed by the side of Buddha. In one instance a statue of Napoleon was put into the Pantheon amidst a number of genii and hobgoblins.

The account of M. Huc, in his *Chinese Travels*, corresponds with that of Mr. Gutzlaff. The Bonzes are described as poor and despised, driving a trade in magic, and burning paper and perfumes at the feet of idols, by way of charms and incantations. In the temples Buddha indeed presides in his usual attitude of quiet apathy, surrounded by secondary deities; while the adjoining hall contains a pantheon, or as he describes it, a pandemonium, containing monsters and images of saints and heroes, in the most grotesque confusion. From the account of this writer it seems that all the religions in China are at a low ebb, the prevailing sentiment being indifferentism.

The ideas of futurity there current are very practical. Elevated or refined motives of arriving at nirvana have very little influence on practice. It is enough to know that in the transmigration good and evil destinies await us, and the Bonzes are supposed to have the power of unlocking the gates of heaven and hell. Money is paid and ceremonies carried on for the purpose of releasing lost relatives from

places of torment, and advancing them through different gradations of paradise.

In Ceylon also strange practices are resorted to by priests for the purpose of averting the ills of life caused by evil spirits; but they are less revolting than those just referred to. Spence Hardy, who assisted on one of these occasions, describes the ceremony at some length. It lasted seven days, and was attended by large numbers of both sexes, who treated it as a high festival. A relic of Buddha was produced, and day by day was passed in the reading of the scriptures and in chanting. As the proceedings drew to a close a procession was organized, which visited a number of localities supposed to be occupied by or haunted by certain gods, who were specially invited to attend the service. An apparition was then introduced amid the burning of sulphur, who was supposed to come direct from the gods, and, on the name of each god being called out, the messenger announced that he would attend at the service.

But without pursuing this subject further, it may be enough to say here that many new doctrines and practices are found in after times mingled with the old faith. Thus we have fanciful notions of other Buddhas past and to come, whose images have found a place in the temples by the side of those of Buddha himself. A belief in the existence of antecedent Buddhas existed from the first, and the founder of the religion is said to have prophesied that a favourite disciple would be his successor in some distant age. These ideas became expanded, and, as the worship of saints with their relics spread, the founder of the religion sank in importance. The novelties introduced varied in the north and south. In the former, there has been a leaning to new developments of the old principle, and new objects of worship have arisen, some of which have the appearance of being mere abstractions.* Connected with this has been

* Mr. Rhys Davids says that as Buddhism declined in the north, the *Tantra* system, a mixture of magic and witchcraft and Siva worship, was incorporated into the corrupted Buddhism. The founder of the system, Asanga, introduced

the rise of what has been called Lamaism. I suppose there was nothing so far from the views of Buddha as to establish a priesthood. He encouraged celibacy and monastic institutions on social and moral grounds, and in furtherance of his rules of life. The monks soon obtained influence, and the influence became afterwards abused. The evils seem to have culminated in China and Tibet. In the latter country an organized hierarchy arose in comparatively modern times. Certain pontiffs exist, in whom is supposed to dwell the spirit of the church. They are the visible incarnations of ancient saints, and on the demise of the head of the church the spirit is supposed to be transferred to some infant, who is sought for diligently. It is said to be the practice to place before a child on whom the future hopes of the community rest certain objects which had belonged to the deceased, and if the infant takes special notice of any of them it is regarded as evidence of recognition of what had belonged to him in a former existence. In this country the monastic system is in full vigour, no less than one-third of the population being under vows. It has been a subject of wonder how in so poor a country so large a proportion of the community are maintained in idleness.

The monastic system lies at the foundation of the whole religion, and the condition in which we find these institutions may be regarded as a test of its vitality or decline. The accounts that we receive of its condition, in the different countries which have accepted the religion, vary. From the narratives of Huc and Gutzlaff we may conclude that in China this religion is at a low ebb. The monks have very little influence except by trading on the ignorance and superstitions of the people. Nor is the picture which is drawn by Spence Hardy* of the state of things in Ceylon

a number of gods or devils, in order to attract the rude tribes. Hiouen Thsang saw the remains of the monastery founded by Asanga, and relates some legends regarding him, but says nothing of these heresies. It is, however, more than probable that Buddhism, in its decline, may have admitted many of the local superstitions into the system.

* Eastern Monasticism.

more cheerful. The priests preserve a certain respectability, but the state of things described by him illustrates many of the evils that we are accustomed to connect with the history of the monastic system in Europe.

Bishop Bigandet, in his account of the monastic system as it exists in Burmah, takes a more favourable view of its condition. The vows are taken in a serious spirit, and the conduct of the monks is respectable and inoffensive. Many young persons enter upon the life, for a time only, with a view to education and training. The system is here maintained by the strictest discipline under a gradation of orders. On the failure of this discipline it is apparent that the whole system would collapse. The bad side of the picture, as it is represented to us by this writer, is the laziness, apathy, and spiritual pride which it engenders.

The various changes which this religion has undergone, owing to decline of discipline, the introduction of other objects of worship, or the extension of the ceremonial with a view to its supernatural or magic effect, are no more than what was to be expected with regard to a faith that was negative in its character. Human nature naturally leans on higher powers and influences, and the wonder is that a creed that proposed to emancipate mankind from them should have lasted so long, and extended so widely. From the first it must have been impossible altogether to shut out prayer, and I question if it was ever disused among the great body of its votaries, though the form it has assumed has been occasionally grotesque.

You may have heard of praying by machinery. In China wheels are set out in open places, and prayers, or passages from holy books are set on them, and the turn of the wheel increases the efficacy of the prayer, or rather of the charm; for they are used rather as incantations against evil influences than as supplications. So also flag-staffs are set up, with silk flags emblazoned with certain mystic words, "*The Jewel is in the Lotus*," i.e. the self-created force is in the universe; and as the wind blows open the banner, and the holy

syllables are exposed to the heaven, a blessing is brought on the land and people.

To what extent the decline of Buddhism in India is attributable to these or other corruptions remains uncertain. It is a thing of the past.* Its history is only to be traced in the monuments of its former greatness, or in the literature that has been recovered from Nepal, Ceylon, and other countries of its adoption. It seems strange that a religion once so prevalent should have passed away from the country of its origin; but such is the case; and so completely had it disappeared, as far back as the sixteenth century, that Abulfazl, the enlightened minister of the Emperor Akbar, sought in vain for a person to give him an account of its doctrines.†

Buddhism is said to have undergone persecution, and indeed to have been expelled from Hindustan.‡ This was

* I do not doubt that it owed its fall in no inconsiderable degree to its endowments, which tempted the cupidity of Indian sovereigns. Numerous inscriptions are extant which testify to the donations of the pious. Indeed the remains of monasteries and cave temples, with their elaborate and costly details, bear evidence to the wealth with which they were endowed. The great monastery of Nalanda was supported, as we are told by one of the Chinese travellers, by the revenues of 100 cities.

† In the census of British India, taken in 1872, out of a total of rather more than 190,000,000, upwards of 2,800,000 are returned as Buddhists and Jains; but of these about 2,450,000 belong to British Burmah only, leaving about 385,000 in India proper, and half of these are in the Bombay presidency, where we know that Jains abound. It is said in the report that Buddhism is practically extinct in southern India. This census takes no account of Ceylon.

‡ The late Professor H. H. Wilson, in a lecture on Buddha and Buddhism, delivered to the Royal Asiatic Society, raised doubts as to the extent of this persecution. It is asserted broadly by a celebrated writer of the fourteenth century that they were ordered to be exterminated by some reigning sovereign from the bridge of Rama to the Snowy Mountains. History does not give a record of any Hindu king with such extended rule. In the view of Professor Wilson, Buddhism died a natural death. "With the discontinuance of the activity of its professors, who, yielding to the indolence which prosperity is apt to engender, ceased to traverse towns and villages in seeking to make proselytes, the Buddhist priest in India sunk into the sloth and ignorance which now characterize the bulk of the priests of the same religion in other countries, especially China, and seem thus to be productive of the same result, working the decay and dissolution of the Buddhist religion."

probably the case to some extent. How far its fall is attributable to the open attacks of Indian governments, how far to internal decay, or the natural revolt of the human mind against an atheistic system, remains in doubt. What we know is that in comparatively modern times there was a great revival of the old religion of the country. Indian reformers arose who restored the study of the Vedas, composed a series of works called the Puranas that became the basis of the modern faith, and Brahmanism again became the prevailing religion of the country.

III.

MODERN INDIA.

I have applied the term Brahminism to this great revival because it is the link that connects the past with the present, and Brahmins took a leading part in the movement which swept away Buddhism, and restored some of the practices and opinions of former days. But the religion which now became dominant appeared under new conditions, and so changed in its forms and objects of worship that it can hardly be regarded as the same. The Brahmins themselves never recovered their former ascendancy. They remained an influential caste rather than a priesthood. They claimed to be the depositories of the old learning, and some of their number have cultivated it with success, and thrown lustre on their order. As the study and recitation of the Vedas was still enjoined, and, indeed, some of the old ritual continued to be employed in the ceremonies of religion, especially those connected with births, deaths, &c., Brahmins continued to hold a high position in the country. In some parts of India, as in Bengal, and in one of the Marhatta states, the chief of which, the Peshwa, was himself a Brahmin, they were regarded with some of the old reverence; and strict Hindus, both there and elsewhere, paid their court to the saintly race, and accepted their ministrations, as before. But this is exceptional; in the part of India where I was, the north-western provinces, as they were called, they are in no way the religious leaders of the people; their place is occupied by the heads of modern sects and by members of the religious orders that swarm throughout the country. I can only briefly advert to the great change which the religious system of India has undergone; and I must confine myself very much to those points on which it has been

modified by the prevalence of Buddhism, or contrasts with it. I will begin by stating briefly what is the prevailing worship of modern India.

You may probably have heard of a triad of gods, with distinct attributes; Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the upholder, and Siva, or Mahadeo, the destroyer. The first can hardly be said to have a place in modern worship. There is a temple to him in Central India, and there is a ghat, or landing-place, in the north, sacred to him, where he is said to have offered a horse-sacrifice on the completion of creation. The two latter gods are the principal objects of adoration from north to south, but not with such marked distinction of attributes as is stated above.

Siva, the destroyer, is the king of terrors. He is thus described in one of the Puranas, "He wanders about surrounded by ghosts and goblins, inebriated, naked, and with dishevelled hair, covered with the ashes of a funeral pile, ornamented with human skulls and bones, sometimes laughing and sometimes crying." He is elsewhere described as the chief of ascetics, and absorbed in meditation. His consort Devi, or Durga, or Bhowani, is still more austere and revolting. She is supposed to delight in blood, and to her sacrifices are offered, and in her honour devotees tear their bodies, and are swung by hooks fixed in their backs, in a way you may have heard of. She used to be the special object of worship of the Thugs—gangs of robbers who infested the high roads, during the confused times which preceded the rise of British power, and strangled their victims. They never failed to resort to the temple of their patron goddess near Mirzapur before they engaged in any of their expeditions. My father, who resided for many years in that neighbourhood, stated that instances were not rare in his time of persons cutting their throats before her image in this temple.

On the other hand, Vishnu is a milder deity, and his appearances on earth have been for beneficial purposes. His avatars or incarnations are numerous. The principal are

connected with the worship of certain deified mortals, who, under the names of Krishna and Rama, appeared on earth, for the destruction of a tyrant in one case, and of a demon in the other. The legendary stories relating to these gods form the subject of two epic poems of prodigious length, and crowded with marvellous incident; scenic representations of their actions are popular all over India.

Besides these two principal deities there are many that represent the nature worship of Vedic times; as Indra, the god of heaven; Varuna, of the waters; Agni, god of fire; Yama, god of the dead, besides the sun and moon. There are new deities unknown to the ancient faith, as Ganesa, with his elephant head, supposed to denote wisdom and cunning. The gods have their consorts, who are also objects of worship, and there is an innumerable tribe of local deities, household gods, &c. It is a vast and monstrous Pantheon, without system, extending to reptiles and even to inanimate objects, such as stones and trees.

Into the history of this motley set of objects of adoration I have no time to enter. It will be best to confine our attention to the two principal and most popular deities mentioned above. The history of the advance of these two gods to the front rank is somewhat obscure. Siva is supposed to represent the Rudra of the Vedas, but is greater in power, and transformed in character. The word Siva, "the blessed one" or "propitious, &c.," is applied, with many other epithets, to the Vedic god; but very little can be founded on that. The Rev. Dr. Stevenson, in his paper on "The Anti-Brahmanical Religions of India," suggests a variety of reasons for supposing that this worship existed before the development of the Brahminical system. His name and the emblem under which he is worshipped were unknown to the ancient literature, and the principal seats of the latter worship are to be found in the south, at a distance from the original settlements of the Arians. Much has been written on the subject. I give the following clear and

concise summary of the result from the pen of Professor Whitney:—¹

“The precise relation between Siva and Rudra is not yet satisfactorily traced out. The introduction of an entirely new divinity from the mountains of the north has been supposed, who was grafted in upon the ancient religion by being identified with Rudra; or, again, a blending of some of Agni’s attributes with those of Rudra to originate a new development. Perhaps neither of these may be necessary; Siva may be a local form of Rudra, arisen under the influence of peculiar climatic relations in the districts from which he made his way into Hindostan proper; introduced among, and readily accepted by a people, which, as the Atharvan shows, was strongly tending towards a terrorism in its religion.”

In whatever way the change in the religion of India was brought about, its tendency is sufficiently marked in Professor Whitney’s concluding remarks. Siva stands forth as representing the power of destruction, and surrounded by terrific images. But destruction is connected in the Indian mind with reproduction; and the emblem under which he is usually worshipped, and which meets the eye in every village, is an impure image of the rudest kind. The god assumes other forms to meet the varying wants of his votaries; sometimes as the lord of spirits and demons (Bhutesvara), and haunting cemeteries, sometimes as a jovial god, dancing and drinking with his wife. and, lastly, as an ascetic, immersed in profound meditation. His wife represents all his attributes intensified.

If the primitive worship of the Arians were to be compared only with this ferocious demon nothing would be greater than the contrast between ancient and modern times. But there is a milder deity, and he, too, is traced

Journal of the American Oriental Society, vol. iii. p. 318.—“I have taken the passage from the fourth volume of Muir’s *Sanscrit Texts*, in which are brought together, with his usual learning and industry, a copious collection of passages illustrative of the worship of Vishnu, Rudra, and Mahadeo, as represented in the Vedic hymns and Brahmanas on the one hand and in the Epics and Puranas on the other, together with the views of the leading scholars of the West who have discussed their connection.”

back to Vedic times. Vishnu appears in the old Pantheon as a god of great power, striding across the heavens in three steps, an act which was regarded by ancient commentators as typifying the progress of the sun or light. He is sometimes addressed in the hymns as if he had the attributes of the Supreme Deity; but similar expressions are applied to several of the other gods in turn, according to the feelings of their worshippers.

In the modern religion he is chiefly known in his avatars. It is supposed by Professor M. Williams that the doctrine of incarnation received its impulse from the success of Buddhism. This great teacher was treated after death with a reverence due to a superhuman nature. What was more natural than that the rival priesthood should seek to supply the people with new objects of faith connected with humanity, but superior to it, and a living power that might satisfy the religious cravings of the human mind? The heroes of the great epic poems, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, were ready at hand for this purpose, and the worship of Rama and Krishna grew up to rival and, ultimately, to supersede the faith of Buddha. The theory supposes that the epic poems were, to some extent, pre-Buddhistic. This is one of the obscure questions in the history of Indian literature that we had better steer clear of. But supposing, as seems probable, that these poems grew out of old legends, and received successive accretions to support Brahminical or other views, the hero worship may have existed of old, and received a powerful impulse from the success of Buddhism. As connected with this it may deserve mention here that Buddha himself figures in the list of the incarnations of Vishnu. It is true that this avatar took place, according to the received doctrine, for the purpose of leading men astray, but it is not the less a sign of a tendency to compromise that Buddha should be claimed as representing this mild deity, whose avatars were for the good of mankind.

Such was the great change in the objects of worship-

which characterizes modern Hinduism. Equally great is the change in the forms and ceremonies of worship. Sacrifices are generally in disuse. They are offered to Kali, the consort of Siva; but this latter and stern god is approached with offerings of flowers, and, occasionally, food of some kind. The ceremonial is austere, and nothing can be eaten which has been presented to the god. The temple worship of India generally is showy, but not repulsive. Lights are burnt, and the images are dressed and decorated, and offerings are presented to their temples. Shrines abound everywhere, and pilgrimages are made to holy places, very commonly in fulfilment of vows made in times of anxiety or affliction. But faith rather than sacrifice is the leading tenet of modern Hinduism, though there is still room for the influence of a priesthood for domestic and other rites. The whole system assumes that there is power within the reach of every man to work out his own salvation independent of the act of a priesthood, that has been fatal to the old dominion of the Brahmins. This change is due to the former prevalence of Buddhism. The revivers of the old faith have been obliged to win back their votaries by accepting some of the principles of their adversaries.

The doctrine of faith and devotion to one particular divinity has given occasion to the formation of sects, whose leaders exercise some of the influence which formerly belonged to the Brahmins. This is, perhaps, the most important innovation of modern times. One of the first things that strikes the eye, on arriving in India, is certain marks painted on the foreheads of large numbers of the people. They are commonly, but erroneously, supposed to be marks of caste. They are really symbols of the sect to which the person belongs. They are not always frontal marks—some are borne on other parts of the body, as the arms or breast, and one of the Siva sects wears a lingam (or phallus) mark round his neck. The difference of emblem sometimes marks a distinction that would be otherwise difficult to discover.

The development of the new system belongs to comparatively modern times. It was ushered in during an age of intense religious fervour. The aim of the founders of the new sects was to enhance the importance of the worship of the particular god to which each of them was devoted; and they engaged in keen controversy with each other, many of the early sects, as also the Buddhists, passing away in the struggle. The age was marked also by a revival of the study of the Vedas, and elaborate commentaries were composed to assist the student in his reading of the ancient dialect, and in explanation of the doctrine. A new literature also arose, entitled the Puranas. They are a series of mythological treatises, each of which enhances the importance of the god in whose honour it is composed. Schools of philosophy were founded, some of which recognize the authority of the Vedas, others are regarded as heretical and atheistic.

It has been usual in any notice of the Hindu sects to give some account of the Jains, the Sikhs, and modern theistic sects, like those founded by Rammohun Roy or Keshab Chandra Sen. The former may be regarded as an offset from Buddhism, if Buddhism is not, as is contended, a form of Jainism. The Jains have managed to keep up appearances with their rivals, and though rejecting the Vedas, they maintain a modified belief in some of the Hindu gods, resort to some of the rites of the Hindus, recognize castes, and sometimes employ Brahmins. Hence they survived the conflict in which the Buddhists perished, and still exist in considerable numbers in the west of India. The architectural remains in the south of India are very numerous, and point to a time when their faith was widely extended. The Sikhs are better known to us as a conquering race, who, under Runjeet Sing, became one of the most powerful states in the north of India, than as a religious body. They were originally an obscure sect of Hindus, who maintained much of the Hindu faith and practice, but taught an inner doctrine, by which the spirit was to be liberated from earthly delusions and seek reunion with its maker. It was the aim

of its founder to unite the Hindus and Mahomedans in one common faith and worship; but having suffered persecution from the latter in the sixteenth century under the Emperor Aurungzebe, they turned fiercely on their persecutors and contributed to the downfall of the Mogul dominion.

I need not enter here into the modern developments of theism. Rammohun Roy professed to deduce his creed from the Vedas, or rather from the later Vedic literature, the Upanishads. The more recent theistic societies are well known to have thrown off all reliance on the literature of their countrymen as standards of religious opinion. I only refer to these various phases of Hindu thought as illustrative of the unsettled state of the Hindu mind in modern times, and its readiness to accept novelties.*

* It is to be regretted that the history of the rise of the modern sects should be so obscure. The scanty information that has been presented to the public leave us in doubt how much there was of moral teaching in this great movement. Professor M. Williams, in his *Hinduism*, describes them as reforming sects, founded to counteract the left-handed worship, which, according to the professor's opinion, prevailed through the greater part of India about four or five centuries ago. This statement, if it means that the founders were reformers in the sense of moral teachers, can, I think, be only accepted partially. That religion was at a low ebb when the reforming sects arose may be assumed; and it is probable that the result of the long prevalence of Buddhism was an indifferentism and apathy which may have been accompanied by a low standard of morals. But the new teaching partook of the character of religious enthusiasm, and was as dangerous to morals as the atheism of the Buddhist. This I infer from the record of the old controversies as described in H. H. Wilson's essay, and from the modern standards, such as the Puranas and Saktas. In the early ages of Christianity popular feeling was frequently excited against the rising faith by the charge of atheism, and any great calamities were attributed to the neglect of the worship of the gods. The persecution to which the Buddhists were subjected was probably excited by similar feelings. It was the aim of the founders of the new sects to exalt the power and importance of Siva or Vishnu as their protectors in life for good or for evil, and the sole object of their reliance. The sanctity which these leaders acquired encouraged imitation, and the movement has gone on to the present day.

The aim of some of these new teachers was higher, and it is pleasing to trace signs of a movement in support of the unity of God at an early period. Thus Kabir aimed, like the Sikhs, his followers and imitators, at the union of all persuasions, Mussulman as well as Hindu, in the belief in one God, and at the

Without attempting to follow the numerous small associations, it will be enough to take notice of the two leading denominations, Vishnavas and Saivas, the worshippers of Vishnu and Siva. These again are subdivided into lay and clerical. The late Professor H. H. Wilson, whose account of the religious sects, published in the "Asiatic Transactions" of 1828, is the most complete extant, informs us that the bulk of the votaries are generally, but not always, of the first order; whilst the rest, or the clerical class, are sometimes monastic and sometimes secular. These matters are generally left to the option of the votaries; some of the teachers engage in business, but the majority lead an ascetic life. Then, again, some live in *maths* or monasteries, others wander about as mendicants for some portion of their life. The maths are scattered over the country, each being under the control of a *mahant* or superior, with a certain number of *chelas* or pupils. The election of a *mahant* is a very im-

4 / abrogation of caste distinction. His teaching, like that of many others of these reformers, according to H. H. Wilson's account, resembles in many points the Vishnavite creed. There was very little of pure theism, but a compromise with the prevailing beliefs of the country, with a tendency to quietism and more or less of an ascetic spirit. As regards moral teaching, some of the sects take a high tone, such as the Sadhs, who have a moral code embodied in twelve *hukams*, or commandments, which will bear comparison with the code of Buddha; or the followers of Swami Narain, a teacher of the present century, who are very numerous in the west of India. Professor M. Williams in his recent visit to India was presented by one of the spiritual heads of this latter body with a copy of their moral code, and it is said to be of a pure and lofty character. Purity and chastity of life was the key-note of his teaching. There is a very interesting account of him in Bishop Heber's journal. When the bishop was in Guzerat in 1825 he heard much of his fame, and of the purity of his teaching. The Indian reformer sought an interview with the bishop, and came supported by a little army of devoted followers armed to the teeth, while the bishop received the support of his bodyguard of sepoys. The report of this interview and of their conference is very graphically told, and confirms what has been said by H. H. Wilson as to the tendency in these movements to compromise with existing superstitions. The profession of the Indian reformer of a belief in one God, maker of all things in heaven and earth, filling all space and governing all things, and dwelling in the hearts of all who diligently sought him, was followed by his unfolding a large picture of the god Krishna, of impure reputation, in the form of a naked man with two women fanning him.

portant affair, being usually conducted by the superiors of other monasteries. Under native governments, whether Hindu or Mohammedan, the election was regarded as a matter of public importance, the governor of a province presiding at the election. This will not surprise you when you understand what was the influence of these dignitaries. The following account of them is taken from Elphinstone's *History of India*, and is given from his own personal observations:—

“The power of these heads of sects is one of the most remarkable innovations in the Hindu system. Many of them in the south (especially those of regular orders) have large establishments, supported by grants of land, and contributions from their flocks. Their income is chiefly spent in charity, but they maintain a good deal of state, especially on their circuits, when they are accompanied by elephants, flags, &c., like temporal dignitaries, followed by crowds of disciples, and are received with honour by all princes whose countries they enter. Their function is, indeed, an important one, being no less than inspection of the state of morals and caste, involving the duties and power of a censor.”

The authority of the guru or spiritual instructor is enhanced by the reverence which attaches to the founder of the sect. This is described as a sort of deification, in imitation of practices long familiar to the Buddhists and Jains. They have become the saints of the modern religion; and their successors inherit the sanctity and authority which belonged to their predecessors; so that we find in modern India a sort of Lamaism established. The authority which formerly attached to some saint or Rishi of tradition is now exercised by living persons, whose very word carries with it a sort of infallibility. This sanctity, it should be added, belongs to the office of the guru. The blind and extravagant adoration he receives is supposed by Wilson to be the growth of later times. The earliest works inculcated reverence, and directed the disciple to look on his guru as a second father, not as his god. Passages are quoted from later Puranas which declare the deity and guru to be the same,

and this is carried out by some sects of modern origin by asserting the absolute divinity of their temporal head. They treat him as their Krishna, or deity incarnate, venerating him as their *Ishta Devati*, or elected God. These extravagant pretensions are supposed by the same author to have been assumed in order to cope with the rivalry of the Brahmins. It seems, however, from the past history of the religion, to be the natural outcoming of the superstition.*

Such is the machinery by which the modern system is mainly upheld, and its establishment has been marked by a tendency to abolish caste distinctions in religious usages, an innovation clearly due to the long influence of Buddhism.

* In illustration of the readiness with which these claims to divine authority have been accepted in modern times, I may refer to the account of "an hereditary living deity," which appears in the seventh volume of the *Asiatic Researches*. He lived in great state in a village in the neighbourhood of Poona, and was treated with the utmost devotion. Some gentlemen of the embassy that visited this Marhatta court in 1800 heard of his fame and visited him. According to the narrative the god Ganesa had revealed himself to his ancestor, a Brahmin, who had been long engaged in the practice of austerities, and desired him, on coming out of his bath in the morning, to seize on the first object that came to hand, and it should henceforward be sacred to the god, and he gave a further assurance that the spirit of the deity should dwell in him and in the person of his descendants to the seventh generation. The article seized upon happened to be a large stone, several pounds in weight, which was ever afterwards held in reverence. The family was supported by the donations of the surrounding population, assisted by some rent-free land, the gift of the sovereign. The disbursements in support of temples, Brahmins, and the poor were on a much larger scale; and this was held to be a proof of the miraculous powers with which the saint was endowed. The holy man, whom the English party visited, was the sixth in descent from the founder of the line, and lived in a sort of state, receiving the homage of his followers, and even of princes. The family was said to be half-witted, they paid no attention to worldly affairs, every act being supposed to be done by the inspiration of the god, and their childish blubbing remarks were accepted as the suggestions of his spirit. Nothing of this, however, appeared on the occasion of the visit of the English party. The Deo, as he was called, took no notice of them at first; he then regarded them attentively but wildly, and after a little more of this mummary he put to them several questions. Then he fixed his eyes on vacancy, and ended by desiring them to ask him any questions, as in all probability the future would be opened to them. They desired to know the result of the pending war between England and France; when the holy man declared aloud that it would terminate triumphantly to the English within six moons, and so ended the interview.

As a rule the modern sects are founded on the principle of the natural equality of mankind before their God. Though in some the Brahminical influence predominates, they generally recruit their numbers from all castes, and there is a marked leaning to abolish these distinctions in some of the religious rites. This is conspicuously the case during the great festival of Jagarnath at Puri, when high and low eat in common the food offered to the idol. It has been contended on this account that the temple of that god was formerly devoted to ceremonies connected with Buddhism, but the practice exists elsewhere. I must now add something with regard to the prevailing opinions and practices of modern times.

As Buddhism had its metaphysical as well as practical sides, so it is with the new Hinduism. The philosophical systems are supposed to have grown out of the speculations of the later Vedic literature. Their history is very uncertain, and we need not enter upon it here. Some of the orthodox schools claim to be founded on the doctrines of the Upanishads. They all may be supposed to have received an impulse and something of their peculiar character from the struggle between the old faith and Buddhism. But while the doctrine of the Upanishads and that of Buddhism were both somewhat hazy, that of the schools, as we now know them, have a precision and a claim to philosophic composition, which did not exist in ancient times. There is not much of reason and argument in the Sutras or ancient compositions, on which they are founded. Like the Indian scientific literature generally, they are dogmatic and positive, and without argument or proof. They are described as apothegms, but they are so terse that they read like the headings of chapters, and would be scarcely intelligible without commentators. The doctrine is unfolded by later writers with something of system, and represents views that have their counterpart in the opinions of the western world. There is materialism, atheism more or less pronounced, idealism, atomical and logical doctrine. We have here only to con-

sider them in connection with religion, and they command the greatest interest on account of their influence, not merely on the educated classes, but, to some extent, on the people. I have already pointed out to you some of the leading doctrines common to all. They each and all aim at a release from the bondage of the present existence, with a view to arrive at a state of calm resembling the Buddhist *nirvana*. Indeed, this latter term is not confined to Buddhist writers. The systems differ in their fundamental principles and in the course of action to be pursued, and the nature of the final rest to which they hope to arrive. Thus the release of the Sankhya philosopher is from an alliance with plastic nature. The soul is in union with nature, and by this union the act of creation, that is, the development of intellect, the organs, consciousness, and the elements is effected. The wish of the soul is for liberation. This is arrived at by the attainment of spiritual knowledge, and the maxims on which the modern teaching is founded concludes with these words: "So through study of principles the conclusive, incontrovertible, one only knowledge is attained, that neither *I am*, nor aught as mine, nor do I exist."

This strange doctrine bears a resemblance to that of Buddha, and many writers have leaned to the opinion that Buddhism borrowed its ideas from the Sankhya philosophy. But this latter school had a deistical branch, whose practical teaching was very different. According to the latter "The promptest mode of attaining beatitude through absorbed contemplation, is devotion to God; consisting in repeated muttering of his mystical name, the syllable *om*, at the same time meditating its signification. It is this which constitutes efficacious devotion; whereby the deity, propitiated, confers on the votary the boon that is sought; precluding all impediments, and affecting the attainment of an inward sentiment that prepares the soul for liberation."*

* This and some other quotations on the subject of the philosophical systems are from Mr. Colebrooke's essays on the religion and philosophy of the Hindus. He at one time leant to the opinion that the sect of Buddha borrowed its doc-

The conclusions of another school, which bears the title of *Nyāya* (reasoning), are similar to the above. This is Mr. Colebrooke's account:—

“The *Nyāya*, as well as the *Sankhya*, concur with other schools of psychology in promising beatitude, or final excellence, and (*mōksha*) deliverance from evil, for the reward of a thorough knowledge of the principles which they teach; that is, of truth, meaning the conviction of the soul's eternal existence separable from the body.”

This is expressed more fully in a passage further on, which resembles more nearly one side of the Buddhist doctrine.

“This liberation from ill is attained by soul, acquainted with the truth (*tutwa*), by means of holy science; divested of passion through knowledge of the evil incident to objects; meditating on itself; and, by the maturity of self-knowledge, making its own essence present; relieved from impediments; not earning fresh merit or demerit, by deeds done with desire; discerning the previous burden of merit or demerit, by devout contemplation; and acquitting it through compressed endurance of its fruit; and thus (previous acts being annulled and present body departed, and no future body accruing), there is no further connection with the various sorts of ill, since there is no cause for them. This, then, is prevention of pain of every sort; it is deliverance and beatitude.”

I turn from these to another and a very different school; and here we seem to enter more directly within the realm of theology. The celebrated Vedānta professes to be founded on the teaching of the Upanishads, and its writers quote from them at every step. The Sūtras of this school begin from the beginning of all things, “Next, therefore, the inquiry is concerning God;” and they proceed thus: “(He is that) whence

trines from the *Sankhya*, and he was in this followed by other writers; but in his later essays on the philosophy of the Hindus he expresses himself more guardedly, and while treating on the Buddhists and Jains he confines himself to the remark that their views, like those of some other heretical sects, bear some analogy to the *Sankhya*. This modification of his views I have pointed out in his biography.

are the birth and (continuance and dissolution) of (this world): (He is) the source of (revelation or) holy ordinance. Hence the commentators conclude 'He is the omnipotent creator of the world, and the omniscient author of revelation.'"*

Mixed up with this doctrine is a popular belief of the Vedantins that "The versatile world is a delusion, and that all which passes to the apprehension of the waking individual is but a phantasy presented to his imagination, and every seeming thing is unreal, and all is visionary." According to Mr. Colebrooke this was not a tenet of the original Vedantin philosophy, but of another branch. He considered the doctrine of the early Vedanta as complete and consistent without this graft of a later growth. The completeness of the system without this doctrine is indeed clear from the summary which I will presently quote. But I may point out to you that the doctrine of *Maya*, or illusion, belonged also to the Buddhists, and is attributed to their founder, and it also finds a place in the Sankhya, and crops up over and over again in the teaching of later sects.

The principal and essential tenets of the Vedanta, according to Mr. Colebrooke, are as follows:—

"God is the omniscient and omnipotent cause of the existence, continuance, and dissolution of the universe; creation is an act of his will. He is both efficient and material cause of the world; creator and nature, framer and frame, doer and deed. At the consummation of all things, all are resolved into him. . . . The supreme being is one sole-existent, secondless, entire, without parts, sempiternal, infinite, ineffable, invariable ruler of all, universal soul, truth, wisdom, intelligence, happiness.

"Individual souls, emanating from the supreme one, are likened to innumerable sparks issuing from a blazing fire. From him they proceed, to him they return, being of the same essence. The soul which governs the body, together with its organs, neither is born; nor does it die. It is a portion of the divine substance, and as such infinite, immortal, intelligent, sentient, true."

* It will be seen how meagre the aphorisms become when the parts within brackets, the addition of commentators, are taken away.

There are various degrees of deliverance recognized by this school. One is effected during life, enabling the possessor to perform supernatural actions. The second takes effect upon death, when the soul passes to the highest heaven, the abode of Brahma. The last is when "the wise, liberated from worldly trammels, ascend to the abode and court of Brahma, or, if their attainment of wisdom be complete, they at once pass into a reunion with the divine essence."

If it be asked how this is to be effected the answer is as follows:—

"These several degrees of deliverance are achieved by certain sacrifices, as that of a horse, or by religious exercises in various prescribed modes, together with pious meditation on the being and attributes of God; but the highest degree of it is attainable only by perfect knowledge of the divine nature, and of the identity of God with that which emanated from him, or was created of his substance and partakes of his essence."

These specimens of the opinions of the orthodox schools show what was the current of thought among educated persons on the revival of the Brahminical religion, and exhibit a portion of the armoury by which the Buddhist and other heresies were assailed. They do not, however, represent the whole working of the Indian mind at this period. There were other heretical sects, besides Buddhists and Jains, and it will not surprise you to hear that, amidst this turmoil, scoffers and free-thinkers arose who set at nought the whole doctrine of liberation, and all that was founded on it.

You have seen that, within the circle of orthodoxy, there was a large freedom of opinion, and the Sankhya school only maintained its position by some formal acknowledgment of the authority of the Vedas; but the *Charvakas*, or materialists, propounded a scheme of universal scepticism. There is an interesting article on their views by Dr. Muir in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for 1872, in which he brings together various passages from standard Sanscrit

authors representing their opinions. The first lines from the first extract quoted by him will exhibit their tendency.

“There is no heaven, no final liberation, no soul (which continues to exist), in another world, nor any ceremonies of castes or orders which are productive of future reward. The Agni-hotra sacrifice, the three Vedas, the mendicant triple staff, and the practice of smearing with ashes, are the means of livelihood ordained by the creator for men who have neither understanding nor energy, &c.”

In the opinion of Dr. Muir there was a wide prevalence of atheistic sentiments in the middle ages of Indian history, *i.e.* in the centuries subsequent to the commencement of the Christian era. They do not appear to have been reduced to any system.

It may be added that some of the devoted worshippers of Siva or Vishnu have developed special systems which are only known to us by their controversies with the high orthodox school, on metaphysical questions affecting the attributes of the deity. In the practices enjoined they resemble one or other of those already mentioned. Some of them, such as the Bhavatas, or devotees of Vishnu, add to the other rules the resorting to temples, prayers, hymns, and other ordinary ceremonies of religion.

With these exceptions the different systems may be regarded as the common property of the different sects. A celebrated teacher of the eighth or ninth century of our era, Sancara Acharya, who had great influence in remodelling the Hindu system, was a devout worshipper of Siva, and, indeed, is regarded by the orders of ascetics founded by him as an incarnation of that god, combined with it a devotion to the vedantin philosophy. The leaders of other sects also encouraged asceticism, but as a rule the leaning of the Sivaites is to asceticism, that of the Vishnavas is to the doctrine of faith.

Before passing from the speculative views of the modern religion I should add a word about those which are unfolded in an episode of one of the great Indian epics, and are pro-

bably better known as an exposition of Indian mysticism than any of those systems I have just referred to. In this poem the hero Arjuna pauses before the commencement of a great battle to hold a celestial colloquy with the god Krishna, who has taken upon himself the human form, and is acting as Arjuna's charioteer. The hero is seized with compunction at the thought of destroying his own kinsmen, who are arrayed against him, and he addresses Krishna thus: "Woe is me! what a great crime we are about to commit. Alas, that for the lust of the enjoyment of dominion we stand here ready to murder the kindred of our own blood. I would rather that the sons of Dhritarashtra should come upon me and kill me unguarded in the field."

The god thus adjured enters upon a series of dialogues on all the abstruse questions that have engaged the human mind.

This exposition of doctrine is by some regarded as eclectic, and framed with a view of combining the different systems. This it does to some extent, for we meet with views as opposed as the Vedanta and the Sankhya, but the main object of the teaching, subject to one qualification, is to inculcate the practice of the Yoga, a discipline of the mind involving abstraction from objects of sense or intellectual exercise, and which is mixed up, in different degrees, in all the systems. The teaching is summed up at the conclusion of the sixth lecture.

"The man who is desirous of learning this devotion, the spiritual application of the soul, exceedeth even the word of Brahma. The Yogee, who, labouring with all his might, is purified of his offences and after many births is made perfect, at length goeth to the supreme abode. The Yogee is more exalted than those zealots who harass themselves in performing penances, is respected above the learned in science, and superior to those who are attached to moral works; wherefore, O Arjun, resolve thou to become a Yogee! —of all Yogeers I respect him as the most devout who hath faith in me, and who serveth me with a soul possessed of my spirit."

This doctrine of faith pervades the whole poem, and, in

the form in which it is presented to the reader, carries with it something that is prepossessing. Let it be remembered that it was first employed in antagonism to the frivolous observances of the Brahminical, as also of the Buddhist creed. Everything was to be done with a motive, and the spring of our actions, according to this teaching, was a perfect reliance on the promise of the god to sever his votaries from their earthly trammels, and unite them with himself. I will add one specimen of this teaching, because it represents this side of the modern Hindu creed in its oldest and best form. There are many elevated passages in this remarkable poem, bearing on the duties of life and man's spiritual relation to God. I must confine myself to that which illustrates the practical teaching of the day. Thus in answer to Arjuna's question, Of those who are engaged in various acts of worship, who know God best? Krishna answers, "those who are endued with steady faith and serve him in his incorruptible and invisible form." He adds, "Those who are attached to my invisible nature have the greater labour to encounter, because an invisible path is difficult to be found by corporeal beings. They also who, preferring me, leave all works for me, and free from the worship of all others, contemplate and serve me alone, I presently raise them up from the ocean of this region of mortality. Place, then, thy heart on me, and penetrate me with thy understanding, and thou shalt, without doubt, hereafter enter into me. But if thou shouldst be unable at once steadfastly to fix thy mind on me, endeavour to find me by constant practice. If, after practice, thou art still unable, follow me in my works supreme; for by performing works for me thou shalt attain perfection. But shouldst thou find thyself unequal to this task, put thy trust in me alone, be of humble spirit, and forsake the fruit of every action."

The doctrine of faith here set forth has been abused in later times and given rise to a new literature remarkable for its contrast to that of the Vedas. The ancient hymns

were calm and unimpassioned, and breathe something of awe and reverence to the gods to whom they were addressed. The modern hymns and songs are warm and impassioned, and, in some cases, employ the language of sensual love. It has been supposed that this style has been borrowed from the Persian mystics, who employed the language of earthly rapture to express the desire of the soul to be reunited to the deity. But this language is not peculiar to the Hindus nor to the Persians. Allegorical language, derived from earthly union, has been employed both in ancient and modern times to represent the tie that should unite man with his maker, and is only enduring when the simile is veiled in chaste and subdued language. The Sufis, as the mystics are called in Persia, became very numerous in modern times, and this style pervades much of the modern poetry. "O the bliss of that day," says one of them, quoted by H. H. Wilson, "when I shall depart from this desolate mansion, shall seek rest for my soul, and shall follow the traces of my beloved!" Other specimens, which may be found in Sir W. Jones's writings, are more strained and far-fetched. A curious specimen of the same style of composition, as it was developed among the Hindus, is given by the same author in his translation of the songs of Jayadeva, a poet of modern but not recent times, and whose work, the *Gitagovinda*, celebrates the loves of Radha and the god Krishna. The story is an ordinary tale of passion and jealousy, and in parts is not very delicate. But the rhapsody at the conclusion justifies the language of Sir William Jones that this love story was intended to represent the reciprocal attraction between the divine goodness and the human soul.

"Whatever," says the author, "is delightful in the modes of music, whatever is divine in meditation on Vishnu, whatever is exquisite in the sweet art of love, whatever is graceful in the fine strains of poetry, all that let the happy and wise learn from the songs of Jayadeva, whose soul is united with the foot of Narayan (Vishnu)."

When the religious poetry, as cultivated by authors with some claim to genius, takes this gross form, that of inferior minds may be expected to sink to a lower level. H. H. Wilson informs us that the modern spiritual directors of the people have cultivated, in the vernacular languages, a literature to suit the depraved taste of the age. He says, "they are mostly songs and hymns addressed to Vishnu, Krishna, and Radha, tales and legends of individuals celebrated among themselves as saints, always marvellous, mostly absurd, and not unfrequently immoral, and vague and dogmatic expositions of elements of belief, which, although in some degree discoverable in the Puranas, have assumed a novel and portentous prominence in the doctrines of the Vishnava teachers and the practices of the people. These elements are passionate devotion and all-sufficient faith."

This is a subject I cannot pursue further without entering upon a wide field. An account of the modern religious practices of India would be foreign to the object of this address. I only proposed to lay before you so much of it as may illustrate its character, and the contrast it presents to the ancient creeds of the country. In no respect is this stronger, both as regards the religion of the Vedas and that of Buddha, than in its immoral tendencies. The usual forms of worship in India are simple enough. They have been often described. The idols have their attendants, who wake them in the morning, bathe and dress them, perhaps take them out for an airing, present their daily meals, followed by water to wash the mouth. The ministering priests assist votaries who come to make their offerings, and address prayers, and make vows. But so monotonous a system cannot satisfy the craving of the multitude for excitement. For the popular taste are provided festivals and pilgrimages, and it is to excite the fervour of the people that this debased literature has grown up, and the "doctrine of faith" enjoined. On these occasions the continued recitation

of the name of the god carries with it a peculiar merit, and the air resounds with the excited cries of the multitude.

It must not be supposed that, while the religious literature is so debased, the same reproach attaches to the profane classic literature of India. In a journal kept by my father during his embassy to the Mahratta court of Nagpur in 1800 there is a remark on the different tone of the two classes of composition, that will, I think, be confirmed by those who are familiar with the old literature of India.

He passed a scene celebrated in the Indian theogonies, where the god Rama halted with his wife and brother, and where the latter became enamoured of his brother's wife. "But," Mr. Colebrooke adds, "the ground is more truly classic as the spot which the anonymous author of the *Meghaduta* chose for the scene of his poem. A celestial spirit of an inferior order banished upon earth, and, separated from a beloved wife, makes this hill his abode, and here he vents to a passing cloud his tender regrets and amorous impatience. The chaste love which is the subject of that beautiful little poem, contrasted with the incestuous desires of Lacshman and all the licentious legends of the voluminous Puranas, may suggest that preference is due (and assuredly it is) to the profane before the sacred poetry of the Hindus."

My account of the modern worship of the Hindus has been hitherto almost entirely confined to that of the gods of the Pantheon. Something remains to be said of the worship of the goddesses,—the left-handed worship, as it is called. It is a subject I would willingly pass over, because it represents the religion of the country in its lowest state of degradation, and my remarks shall be sparing. Each of the principal gods has his counterpart, or female representative, who is regarded as his energy personified. The consort of Siva is well known as Durga or Kali, and she receives many other aliases. That of Vishnu is Lakshmi, and, as the Puranas were composed to promote the worship of and faith in the gods, the Tantras were written to inculcate

reliance on their consorts. Though the literature is large, it has, as yet, been imperfectly examined; and as some of the rites or orgies are carried on in secret, accurate information is not easily procurable, and there has been an unwillingness to give credit to the gross stories that are related of what passes at these nocturnal assemblies. Respectable Hindus disavow any connection with proceedings that throw a stain on their religion; but the main facts regarding them are indisputable.

The worship of the female principle is supposed by H. H. Wilson, in his elaborate essay on the sects of Hindus, to have originated in a literal application of the metaphorical language of the Vedas, in which the act of creation is represented by the will or desire on the part of the god to multiply himself. This first manifestation of divine power is represented by a word which means, literally, personified desire. Thus, according to one of the Puranas, Brahma, having determined to create the universe, became two-fold—the right half becoming a male, the left half a female, which was *Pracriti*, a word that means nature. The worship which has been founded on these distorted views is traced by Wilson in various manifestations of the female principle. The doctrine is of considerable antiquity, and traces of it are to be found in the earliest struggles between the different sects. The gross abuses that have arisen out of it belong to modern times, and are confined to certain parts of India, pre-eminently to Bengal.

The worship is described by Professor M. Williams as a kind of worship of force in its various manifestations. This is, perhaps, too abstract a mode of describing it. The aim of the votaries, in their most simple forms of worship, is to propitiate an evil spirit, as in the rites performed at Vindya-vasani, near Mirzapur, which I have already referred to, or in the well-known performances at the Durgapuja festival. The Tantras profess to teach more; and those who follow their rites expect to arrive at supernatural powers. Certain foods and impure actions are enjoined, accompanied by mys-

tical gesticulations and unmeaning formularies. But I must draw a veil over this part of my subject. When Mr. Ward of the Serampore Mission published his account of the mythology, religion, &c., of India, sixty years since, he entered into some details of the scandalous practices at the meetings of the left-hand worship. They were derived from hearsay information, and were received with incredulity. They are confirmed by an examination of the works on which they are founded, as they have been laid open to us by the writings of the late Professor Wilson, and of Professor M. Williams. It does not appear from the account of the latter writer that they are uniformly full of impure allusions, though he remarks that their tendency is to licentiousness. They are generally, according to his account, mere manuals of mysticism, magic, and superstition of the worst and most silly kind. Some of these compositions give collections of spells for making people enamoured, for destroying sight, for producing or preventing diseases, for injuring crops, and for alchemy.

He adds a remark which I think is open to misconstruction. "When they are better known," he says, "their connection with a distorted view of the Sankhyan philosophy and with some of the corrupt forms of Buddhism will probably be made clear." I suppose this refers to the theoretical teaching of these compositions, for it cannot be meant that the poor Buddhists are to be held responsible for these enormities. These manuals of magic are but a survival, if not an extension, of the worst forms of the Brahminical religion in pre-Buddhist times, as I have described when speaking of the Atharva-Veda. The practice of magic has probably flourished in all times. Some of the rules of the so-called systems of philosophy have for their object the attainment of superhuman or magical power; and I have shown that Buddhism, in its decline, has formed an alliance with magical, as with other superstitions.* No surprise need be felt at

* In the preface to Rajendralala Mitra's edition of the *Latita Vistara* there is an account of a Buddhist Tantra composition, which is described as having "all

finding in this branch of modern literature a development of the same ideas. What is painful to see is the extent of this literature and its evident popularity, the number of the votaries of this superstition, its alliance with the religion of the country, and the practices with which it is occasionally deformed.

I fear that I have already occupied too much of your time, but I must, in conclusion, add a few words on the growth of the monastic orders, a subject that is directly connected with the rise of the modern sects, and owes much of its prominence, in the modern religion, to the example and long prevalence of Buddhism. When the Greeks came in contact with the Indians in the time of Alexander they were profoundly impressed by those matters in the conduct of the sophists, as they were called, which differed most from their own. The austerities of the devotees, their contempt of life and meditations on death are particularly dwelt upon. We know that ascetic observances were enjoined on the Brahmins in ancient times. Several gradations were established, through which the student had to pass in the progress of his initiation to the highest order of devotion. He passed through an austere discipline and lived a life of mendicancy, and in his old age he was enjoined to retire to the forest, and practise the severest austerities. Nothing, however, is said in the old literature of communities or associations established for religious purposes. The Brahmins were a great association in themselves; and the ascetic practices followed by them were those of anchorites. It is probable that some of these recluses came under the observation of the Greeks; but the latter describe the philosophers as living in an enclosure within a grove near the city, under strict discipline, and liable to expulsion by their fellow-monks. It is quite possible, as is the conjecture of Elphinstone, that there were communities of Brahmins collected for purposes of instruction and for discipline. But

the characteristics of the worst specimens of Sakta works of that type." On the priority of Hindu or Buddhist literature of this character I offer no opinion.

it is far more probable that those which came under the observation of the Greeks were Buddhist communities, who, according to their traditions, were formed at the very foundation of their religion, not for the practice of self-torture, but for that purity of life and conduct which was to prepare them for their eternal rest. The monastic system which was founded by Buddha may have existed before his time, but of this we have no evidence. It is certain that, under the teaching of his followers, it spread widely, and formed one of the most important features of the rising religion. On the revival of the Brahminical system it became one of the most powerful engines in the hands of the revivers of the faith and founders of the new sects to win the people to their side. On entering these orders Brahmins break their sacred thread, and other castes renounce their exclusive claims, and become equal members of the new community. It is said that none of the modern orders can be traced higher than the eighth century of our era, and very few are older than the fourteenth.

India at the present day swarms with bodies of religious mendicants. They are met with in large numbers at places of pilgrimage. I have seen hundreds of them on one of these occasions,—strange, wild-looking men with matted hair, covered with dirt and dust, and marked on their brows with strange devices. It is estimated by Ward, whose observations were chiefly confined to Bengal, that about one-eighth of the whole population, belonging to three orders, lived by begging.* The attraction to this life appears to be its freedom of restraint, and sometimes its lawlessness, for they are generally ignorant and illiterate. In a short notice of the system by Mr. Colebrooke, which I published in his biography, he remarks:—

“The maxims of discipline and doctrine, intended for this and the last-mentioned order of ascetics (the *Brahmacharis* and *San-*

* In the census of British India for 1871-72 the number of religious mendicants is occasionally given, but not on any systematic plan, so as to show their whole number. In the North-west Provinces they are said to amount to up-

nyasis) form no part of the religious institutes of the Hindus, but do not seem to be much studied or very strictly observed by modern *Sannyasis*. These are mostly, perhaps universally, mere mendicants, illiterate and dissolute. Many of them follow the profession of arms; others practise robbery for their subsistence. . . . Other sects also, which are considered heterodox (by the learned, at least), are common throughout India. The most remarkable among these heretical ascetics are the *Nagas*, they are naked mendicants, and commonly follow the profession of arms.

"The *Gosains*, or *Goswamis*, more generally engage in commerce. The ten branches of this order, which are distinguished by fanciful names, as *Gir* and *Pervet* (a mountain), and *Puri* (a city), claim for their founder the most learned among the commentators on the philosophy of the Vedas.* Yet these *Gosains* are, with few exceptions, grossly illiterate, not even possessing the knowledge of accounts which is requisite for conducting the extensive trade in which they embark. Some of them, like the *Sannyasis* and the *Nagas*, adopt the military profession. Himmet Behadur, a conspicuous character of the present day,† and the associate of Aly Behadur's conquest in Bundelcund, is himself a *Gosain*, though he bear the title of Raja."

This development of a martial spirit among these religious orders is so remarkable a fact in modern Indian history that you will, perhaps, allow me to quote a short notice which I gave of some of their proceedings in the biography already referred to, in illustration of the preceding remarks:—

"Hordes of armed devotees figured conspicuously in the troublous times which preceded the rise of British power. Professor wards of 240,000, divided into twenty-four separate tribes. In Bengal they are enumerated under the head of outcasts, or those not recognizing caste. It is remarked as follows: "Omitting the native Christians and Buddhists, those who have rejected the trammels of caste are almost entirely composed of Baisnabs (*Vishnavas*?), or Bairagees, who profess to be followers of Vishnu, and should, according to the teaching of their founder, lead a life of asceticism and celibacy; they number 540,000, and are principally found in Lower Bengal." Elsewhere they appear among professions. Out of 629,000 engaged in religious or charitable occupations, there are 30,000 pilgrims, devotees, and religious mendicants (mostly in Bombay); but this part of the census has not been taken with any care.

* Sancara Acharya, mentioned above.

† This was written in 1800.

Wilson, in his account of the '*Nágas*,' mentions an attack which was made by a band of them, several hundreds in number, on the British force under Goddard during their passage through Bundelcund in 1778. He refers to Pennant's *Hindustan*. According to this latter writer Bundelcund swarmed with them. He says that they assembled in numbers of ten and twelve thousand under the pretence of pilgrimages, laid whole countries under contribution, and were guilty of every enormity. Bands of *Gosáins* gave some employment to our troops, at an early period, on the Assam frontier. In Central India they sold their services to native princes; and, on one occasion, rendered important service to Scindia in suppressing an insurrection. More frequently, rival sects waged war with each other, when they met at a place of pilgrimage. The author of the *Dabistán* mentions two occasions in which these conflicts took place, and adds that the *Sannyásis* were frequently seen engaged in war, (Shea's translation, vol. ii., pp. 197 and 231). Hurdwar was a frequent scene of these conflicts. One of these, related in the "*Dabistán*," occurred at Hurdwar in the year 1640 of our era. The facts connected with a more formidable conflict are related by Raper, in his account of the survey of the Ganges in 1807. (*Asiatic Researches*, vol. xi.) It commenced with a private quarrel between two leaders, and ended in a struggle in which the *Gosáins* are said to have destroyed 18,000 of their adversaries, and for some time established a superiority at these periodical assemblages which lasted till the end of the century. A curious account is given by Captain Hardwicke of the insolent bearing of this order during his visit to the fair in 1796. They assumed an authority over the vast multitude (exceeding two millions, according to Captain Hardwicke's estimate), regulated the police, and collected dues in the name of the Mahratta government, their mahants determining cases of complaint. The *Gosáins* swaggered through the Melá, allowing no other sect to carry arms, until the arrival of some Seik chiefs, who brought with them twelve or fourteen thousand horsemen, established an independent authority, and, in the end, attacked and chased away the *Gosáins* (*Asiatic Researches*, vol. vi.)."*

* These several names carry with them distinct significations. Thus *Vairagi* means devoid of passion, from *vi*, privitive, and *rāga*, passion. *Goswami*, from which the modern term Gosain is derived, bears the same meaning. It is liter-

A distinction should be drawn between the austerities practised by way of penance, or for the purpose of propitiating some god or goddess, and those in which people engage under what may be called the Buddhistic idea of liberating the soul from its earthly trammels. To a superficial observer, they may be easily confounded, but they spring from different principles of action, and have their counterpart in similar rules of conduct that have been followed by the votaries of other religions.

I have already referred to the self-inflicted tortures of the Hindus. You have heard of persons throwing themselves under the wheels of the chariot of Juggernath, of others suspended by hooks attached to their backs, and whirled round at the festivals of the goddess Durga. I have seen a man on a pilgrimage to a shrine, several hundreds of miles distant, measuring his length on the ground at every step. There is in one of the early volumes of the Transactions of the Asiatic Society, the account of two devotees, one of whom kept his hands in a fixed position on his head until they became immovable, and in this state he had wandered for years; another who reclined on a bed of spikes. The latter had begun his career when a boy of ten years old, by exercising himself on thorns and pebbles, and for thirty-five years he had used the bed of torture. Self-immolation used to be not uncommon. Persons suffering under incurable diseases sometimes resorted to it. My father was a witness to a scene of intended self-immolation which had a rather comical conclusion. A man suffering from leprosy was preparing for this act of suicide, surrounded by a crowd. He urged the man to change his resolve; the doctor of the station supported his advice, and suggested some medical treat-

ally master of one's passion, from *go*, passion, and *swami*, master. *Sannyasa* means abandonment (of all worldly possessions and affections). *Yoga*, literally, junction, is derived from *yuj*, to join, direct, hence, to fix one's mind. The commentator on the Yoga aphorisms calls it concentration. *Fakir*, commonly applied to all these mendicants, is an Arabic word meaning poor. There are various other terms applied to them, as *Dandis*, from *Danda*, a staff. *Nagas*, a word of uncertain derivation, is supposed to mean naked.

ment; he was so successful that the man was persuaded to abandon his attempt, and the surrounding crowd were also satisfied, all with the exception of one person, and that was the man's wife. These acts are usually the results of vows, or with the hope of atoning for the person's own sins, or those committed in a former existence, or under a superstitious belief that the disease under which the person labours will seize his surviving relations. There is, in the neighbourhood of Nagpur, a hill which, in former times, was resorted to annually by persons for the purpose of suicide. My father mentions in the journal which I have referred to, his encounter with a poor man who was on his way to the hill of suicide. He had made a vow ten years before, when anxious for the safety of a beloved sister who was missing. She was found by him shortly afterwards, and he forgot his vow; but being himself afterwards attacked by illness he thought himself haunted, and the remembrance came back, and he resolved to fulfil the vow. His mind was affected by the feeling of awe of impending dissolution, and he was subject to fits, which the bystanders believed were caused by the offended goddess who haunted him.

Places held sacred by the Hindus used in former times to be the scenes of these acts of suicide. At Sagur island, near to the mouth of the Hoogly, persons threw themselves into the river in fulfilment of vows, and children used to be thrown to be devoured by sharks, under the same superstitious feelings. These practices were discountenanced by the Brahmins, and they were suppressed by the British government under a legislative act in 1802. A similar practice continued to prevail at Allahabad, at the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna, till a much later date. They were of almost daily occurrence. Those who so devoted themselves were carried out to the centre of the stream with two jars fastened to their bodies, which buoyed them up when empty. The intended suicide baled the water in till they were filled, and then sank with them into eternity. An Indian public

servant, whom I knew at Allahabad, informed me that, when formerly acting as magistrate at the same station, he took upon himself to suppress the practice, and experienced no difficulty in having his orders obeyed, the only remonstrant being an old woman who kept a boat for the accommodation of the suicides, and who carried her remonstrances to the official superiors of my friend. Mr. Alexander Calvin, who when I knew him was judge of the high court of appeal in the North-west Provinces, was wisely allowed to carry out his resolution, and the practice was put down, never again to be revived. These various acts of self-torture or self-destruction are usually carried out for the purpose of penance, or expiation, or propitiation, under all imaginable circumstances. Others pursue their ascetic practices with a view to *mukti*, or absorption into the deity, if they believe in one, or arriving at the Buddhist beatitude called *nirvana*. These recluses were originally students of the Vedas under the Brahminical rules, but the act of retirement came to have a merit of its own which has been carried to the extravagant extreme which I have here referred to.

This is the practice of the *Yoga*, which I have already referred to, while explaining the philosophies of India. Its rules have been reduced to a system, and take their place among those of the other schools. The author of the work which is the standard authority for these practices lays down certain directions for bodily and mental exercises, such as long continued suppression of respiration, inhaling or exhaling the breath in a particular manner, painful postures, and restraint of the senses or of thought. By these actions and by profound meditation on special subjects miraculous power is supposed to be attained. I take the following passage from Mr. Colebrooke's essay:

“By such exercises the adept acquires the knowledge of everything past and future, remote or hidden; he divines the thoughts of others; gains the strength of an elephant, the courage of a lion, and the swiftness of the wind; flies in the air, floats in water, dives into the earth, and contemplates all nature at a glance.”

These exercises are merely preparatory acts to enable the soul to enter upon that absorbed contemplation which is chiefly effected by the muttering of the mystic monosyllable *om*, and by which the final deliverance is to be accomplished.

These elaborate rules are seldom acted upon in the present day. In fact they are rather discouraged by some authorities quoted by H. H. Wilson. That author mentions some instances of attempts made by persons who have pursued the practice for hours, if not days, and have described themselves as completely exhausted, with strange objects passing before them, and sparks of fire flashing in their eyes. One man gave up the practice from having an image of himself always before him, and this he knew must be a delusion. The Abbé Dubois, in his description of the manners, &c., of the people of India, gives some amusing instances of the experience of some of these Yogees, as related to him. One was thrown into a violent perspiration, and then he began to see visions. The full moon appeared before him, then he was plunged into darkness. Another saw globes of fire, but his eyes became so inflamed, and he was so tortured by headache, that he gave it up. Many of those who try these practices must break down in the attempt, but the number who have persevered and resorted to these or similar acts of self-torture have been numerous, and their performances have been described by travellers in all ages. They have been often described, and the stories related of them seem incredible. We read of men who fixed their eye-balls on the sun till the sight was destroyed. A Mahomedan traveller, quoted by Mill, in his *History of India*, saw one in this posture, and returning to India sixteen years afterwards found him in the same attitude. Another passed the hot months in India between four fires. This is also referred to in Mill's history. He stood on one leg while the fires were lighted, then on his head with his feet in the air, and remained in this position for three hours, and then he sat cross-legged, &c.

When I was in India I heard of a man who was said to live without food. He was carefully watched, and no one could tell how he was nourished; another case is recorded of a man who remained suspended in the air in a horizontal position. The feat was performed near Madras, and was witnessed by Europeans. Another is said to have lived under water, and another buried himself up to the neck in the earth and lived for several years in this position. There is no end to these extravagancies, and India has always been the chosen field for them; and from thence may have been drawn the opinions which led to the strange performances of anchorites who acquired a reputation for sanctity in the early centuries of Christianity, men who lived in caverns, bearing on their bodies enormous weights of iron, or wasted their bodies with other austerities, one of whom lived on the top of a pillar for many years.*

Some of the acts which I have here described are mere tricks, resorted to by idle mendicants who claim to have arrived at supernatural power, and desire to enjoy a reputa-

* Some of their exercises were observed by the companions of Alexander, such as the standing in forced postures, bearing heavy weights, and exposure to the extreme heat of the sun (Strabo xv.) In the laws of Menu there are some directions for the anchorites. "Let him slide backwards and forwards on the ground, or let him stand a whole day on tip-toe, or let him continue in motion, rising and sitting alternately. . . . In the hot season let him sit exposed to four fires; in the rains let him stand uncovered, even without a mantle; in the cold season let him wear humid vesture," &c., (Menu vi.)

The ascetic practices in Christian times to which I have referred belong chiefly to the third and fourth centuries, when they raged like an epidemic. "The progress of the monks," says Gibbon, "was not less rapid or universal than that of Christianity itself." The motive to these actions was, according to Mosheim, the progress of what he calls a mystic theology, akin to that which has long prevailed in India. "The doctrine was," says Mosheim, "that the divine soul was diffused through all human souls, or, in other words, the faculty of reason, from which proceeds the health and vigour of the body, was an emanation from God into the human soul, and comprehended in it the elements of all truth, human and divine." Hence "they maintained that silence, tranquillity, repose, and solitude, accompanied by such acts of mortification as might tend to extenuate and exhaust the body, were the means by which the hidden and internal word was excited to produce its latent virtues and to instruct men in the knowledge of divine things."

tion for sanctity. Others proceed from feelings which we must respect, though we may not desire to follow their example. To live apart from the world and its enjoyments, to render the mind independent of earthly accidents and trials, to scorn delight, and fix one's thoughts on God only, are aims suggested by the better part of our nature, as also the atonement for sin by acts of penance and bodily mortification. But to pursue the subject further would lead me into a wide field, and the length to which these remarks have extended warn me that it is time to bring them to an end.

I think you will agree that I have fulfilled the promise with which I set out of showing that the history of opinion, and especially religious opinion in India has nothing of the unchangeable character which has been attributed to it. It has undergone as many revolutions as in Europe, and the present differs widely from the past.

It is a strange history. We are brought in contact with modes of thought and superstition that are alien to ancient and modern Europe. The ascetic practices have something in common with those of other religions, but nowhere are they carried to such an extent; nowhere has the doctrine which leads to their exercise such complete sway over its votaries; nowhere is there such a complete setting aside the world and its enjoyments and observances, in the hope of gaining the favour of their gods, or of winning an immortal being, connected with that repose which is the aim of their efforts.

The question naturally arises—If the religion which has been subjected to such changes, which in its present state has no claim to the antiquity which was formerly asserted in its favour, has given way before Buddhism, and has been shaped to meet new and altered conditions of society, and if Buddhism itself has been dismissed as unworthy of a faith, may not the Indian mind be open to the influence of Christianity, and have a future more worthy of man's destiny, than the degrading and impure rites by which its religious

system is now deformed? The attempts to convert the Hindus have been tried in British India for near 100 years, but it is only during the last half century that missionaries have had full sway. The results are disappointing. The cross has made no such conquest as to give a hope of any rapid or general conversion. The obstacles, all must admit, are immense.

The most formidable is caste. All agree in that. Though it is now rather a social than religious institution, it is so bound up with the life of the people as to be the greatest obstacle to conversion. To abandon it is to sacrifice kith and kin. To compromise with it is impossible. The attempt has been made, and those who have made profession of Christianity, while retaining caste, have generally, if not always, relapsed. And yet, the story that I have told you, that caste itself has given way to the teaching of Indian reformers, shows that this difficulty cannot be insuperable.

Akin to this is the system of rites and ceremonies that are bound up with the life of a Hindu, attend him at his birth, marriage, and accompany him to his grave, have the strongest influence on life, and supply a formal religious system that is complete in itself and not easily overthrown.

Then, again, Hinduism is a many-sided religion. It is indeed a gross polytheism, but it adapts itself to the intellectual as well as to the religious nature of man. It is at once polytheistic, monotheistic, mystic, and material. It reconciles a conformity with the outward forms of worship, with a material or atheistic faith. Its votaries have their miracles, their avatars or incarnations; they are strong in their creeds, and cannot be conquered by argument only. Christianity can only advance in proportion as it touches the heart, and appeals to the highest and best nature of man.

In this struggle it has not the aid it has received, in former conversions, from women. The seclusion of women, and their want of education, are serious difficulties. They

are not easily approached, and not prepared, by their life and training, to think for themselves. I wonder how long Christianity would flourish in this country under the same conditions. From the first ages of Christianity the influence of women has been felt, and it prevails still. The movement of late years in favour of female education in India constitutes, in my mind, one of the most hopeful features of the times.

Lastly, the very numbers are against us. Conquests are made, congregations are formed; but unless they are kept together in great centres, it is very difficult to keep up the Christian feeling. If they are scattered they are lost in the immense masses around them, and exposed to all old influences. Christianity is not a popular any more than a national religion, and I am sorry to have to add that the lives of many professed Christians are not examples which encourage imitation.

However, I should not dwell on difficulties. The more we know of Hinduism the better able are we to cope with it. Everything connected with the religious faith of our Indian fellow-subjects excites great interest, and no missionary feels equal to undertake his life of labour without knowing something, not merely of the language, but of the manners and religious history of the people. I have, in preparing this address, consulted some excellent and popular volumes by men of the highest learning, and published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. They are manuals suited for all classes, and I would recommend them to all who desire to know more of this interesting story.

The history of religion in India, in all ages, has shown an earnest striving on the part of some classes of the people after a more spiritual creed than the polytheism of the multitude, and a readiness to receive teachers of strange doctrine, especially if the apostles of the new faith are invested with the sanctity that has always attached in India to men of austere and ascetic lives. The remarkable success that attended the early exertions of Roman Catholic

missionaries in the south of India, who adapted themselves, by their mode of life, to native prejudices in these points, is a signal proof of this. Swartz too is said to have pre-possessed the natives in favour of his teaching by the austerity of his life. The Jesuit missionaries are, indeed, accused of having shown a readiness to compromise on more essential matters. It is certain, however, that their labours were attended with a success that recalls the history of the conversion of the northern nations to Christianity. Xavier is said to have, on one occasion, baptized no less than 10,000 persons. These facts at least show a great readiness on the part of the Hindus to follow new guides. A better ground of our hope for the future is to be found in the fact that a high moral teaching, which places purity of life above all observances, and makes it the foundation of our hopes in a future life, has found a response in the hearts of the Hindus, and this is shown not merely in the rise of the religion of Buddha, but in the history of other sects that have arisen from time to time, and to which I have adverted.

A good work has begun in the south of India. The large numbers that have been gathered into both Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, in that quarter, may be regarded as a sign of something like a national movement. When the army of believers has acquired a force and discipline that will enable it to resist the old influences that surround it, then only can we expect it to advance to new conquests, and I need not add that for any general conversion of the people of India, or of provinces of India, we must ultimately rely on the work of the natives themselves.*

* The enumeration of the Christians of British India in the census of 1871-72 appears to have been very carefully taken, both as regards numbers and their distribution. Out of a total of 896,658, about 250,000 appear to be Europeans, or to have European blood in their veins. About three-fifths are in Madras, where, in addition to those in the native states, they number about 534,000, or $1\frac{3}{4}$ per cent of the inhabitants. The number of Roman Catholics is 416,000, while nearly 118,000 are enrolled as Protestants. In Bombay there are 126,000 Christians, of whom nearly 83,000 are returned as Roman Catholics

Let us hope that with the blessing of God these labours will yield fruit. The past history should cheer us in the hope that what has been done by Buddha in overthrowing a false faith, may be within the reach of Christians in founding one with higher aims and hopes, and better suited to promote the present and future welfare of the Indian race.

(chiefly Indo-Portuguese). In Bengal the number of Christians is only 90,000. The native Christians throughout British India only amount to 595,815, of whom nearly five-sixths are in Madras. The Roman Catholics claim 397,071, while 92,228 are Protestants. Out of the 90,000 Christians in Bengal less than one-half (48,000) are native converts, and a large number of these belong to Chota Nagpoor, where the preaching of the Gospel has been very successful among the wild hill tribes. Although there are several missions in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, only about 3000 native Christians are returned for the city itself.

